# TAUNTON'S JUNE/JULY 1996 NO. 15

FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE TO COOK

Authentic Carolina Barbecue

**Grilling Pizza** 

New Ideas for Sautéing Vegetables

How to Steam Fish for Pure Flavors

Pairing Pasta and Beans

Passionfruit Desserts





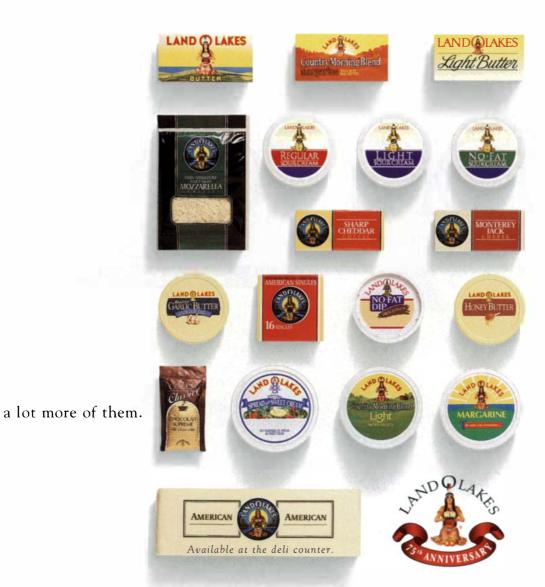
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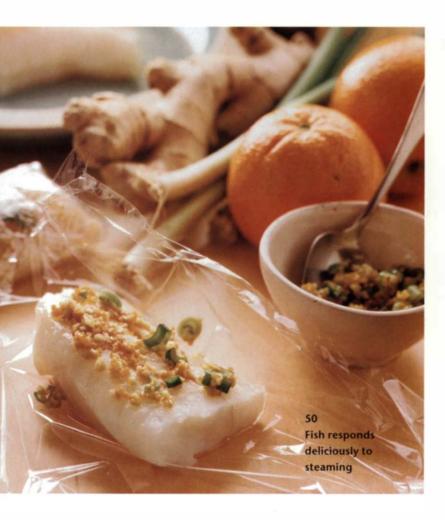


Pasta and beans form a satisfying partnership



# fine JUNE/JULY 1996 ISSUE 15 OCH THE STREET OF THE STREET





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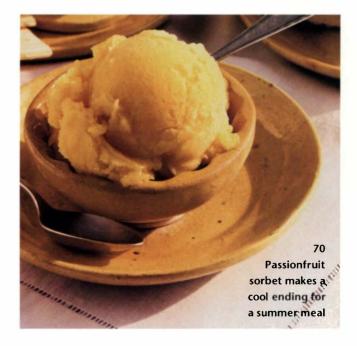
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  Scoop its pulp or squeeze its juice to add intense flavor to pound cake, sorbet, and fruit salad

On the cover: Turkish Bread & Olive Salad, "Making Vibrant Mediterranean Bread Salads," p. 32.

Cover photo, Penina. Opposite page: top, Noel Barnhurst; bottom, Brian Hagiwara. This page: top, Mark Thomas; below, Ellen Silverman.



Insalata di Noci Ciccati

Only Bertolli, Italy's best-selling, best-loved olive oil, could bring out the true, subtle flavors of such delicious foods as

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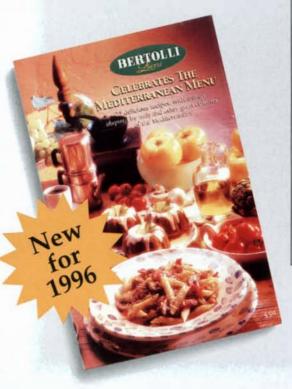
#### Bertolli Insalata di Noci Ciccati

Insalata di Noci Ciccati.

- 3 Tbsp. Bertolli Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 2 Tbsp. chopped walnuts 1 Tbsp. mild red wine vinegar (or fresh lemon juice) 1/8 tsp. satt
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste

additional walnut pieces. Serves 4.

- 6 cups forn mixed salad greens (select at least 3: arugula, radicchio, curly endive, romaine)
- 1/2 cup thin strips yellow or orange bell pepper 1/2 cup finely sliced, trimmed
- fresh fennel, when in season Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese for shaving over the salad (Optional)
- 1. Combine the olive oil and walnuts in a small skillet. Heat, stirring over very low heat just until walnuts are warm. Remove from the heat. Stir in the vinegar or lemon juice, salt and pepper. 2. Combine the salad greens with the bell pepper and fennel (if available) in a salad bowl. Add the walnut dressing and toss the salad well. Divide the salad among four plates. Optional, using a vegetable peeler, peel wide strips of the Parmigiano-Reggiano over each salad. Garnish with





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If you'd like to share your thoughts on topics like genetically engineered tomatoes, our most recent baking article, or your food and cooking philosophies, here's the place to do so. Send your comments to Letters, Fine Cooking, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506.

#### Lecithin a cure for curdling

Being in a culinary teaching program, I probably see more than the usual amount of broken ganaches. I've been able to successfully return the product to an almost perfect condition by adding about 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon of liquid lecithin, an inexpensive natural emulsifier, which is available in health-food stores.

Nothing has to be done to the broken ganache but to stir in the lecithin. I also see a lot of curdled custards, such as lemon curd. Lecithin has been able to resurrect these without fail.

> —Е. Boyer, Houston, TX

#### Lemongrass tops for tea

Alexandra Greeley's essay on lemongrass (Fine Cooking #11, p. 92) reminded me of a conversation I had with a charming Vietnamese woman I sat across from on the

Rockport commuter train. She noted my Chinatown

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shopping bags bulging with

might be, the tea was delicious, fragrant, and spiritually uplifting.

> —Shirlie Slater. Salem, MA

#### A simple image to explain tempering chocolate

I love your magazine! I like the way you explain why things happen without turning the explanation into a college science class.

I took a class on chocolate at the Cooking School of the Rockies. Instructor Mary Copeland explained tempering in a way that makes it easier to understand.

She said to imagine a pot of chicken stock. When you chill it, you end up with a layer of stock and a layer of fat. But if you stir the stock the whole time it's cooling, you'll have stock that's cool vet completely blended. This analogy helped me to understand exactly what I was doing when tempering chocolate.

> -Michelle Mikulski, Loveland, CO

#### Why would anyone want irradiated food?

I am a new subscriber to Fine Cooking and was very pleased with the variety of articles in the first issue I received.

I must tell you, however, that my jaw hit the floor when

I read the letter by Linda Mann (Fine Cooking #10, p. 6) stating that she looked forward to walking into her supermarket produce section "protected by irradiation." Does she think that the radia-

Martha Holmberg

ART DIRECTOR Steve Hunter

MANAGING EDITOR

Ian Newberry

ASSOCIATE EDITORS Dana Harris

Joanne McAllister Smart

ASSISTANT FOITOR **Amy Albert** 

COPY/PRODUCTION EDITOR Li Agen

ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR Annie Giammattei

ILLUSTRATOR

Rosalie Vaccaro

EDITORIAL SECRETARY Kim Landi

RECIPE TESTER

Abigail Johnson Dodge

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Paul Bertolli, Shirley O. Corriber, lames Peterson, Molly Stevens, Rosina Tinari Wilson

PUBLISHER

**Christine Arrington** 

CORPORATE CIRCULATION DIRECTOR **Douglas Newton** 

MARKETING SECRETARY Larisa Greiner

ADVERTISING MANAGER Tom Leibbacher

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS MANAGER Paul McGahren

ADVERTISING SALES COORDINATOR Nancy Crider

HOW TO CONTACT FINE COOKING:

Telephone:

800-283-7252 203-426-8171

Fax:

203-426-3434

F-Mail America Online:

FINECOOKNG CompuServe: 74602,2651

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vegetables and herbs, including lemongrass. She advised me not to discard the tough tops and outer leaves, but to freeze them and when I felt in need of a tonic, to make a tea the medicinal properties

and reading a label that says from them. I did. Whatever tion is selective, only choosing



JUNE/JULY 1996

#### **LETTERS**

to destroy cells of the "bad" bacteria and leaving the cells of the food untouched? It's all organic material, and it's all damaged by an exposure to radiation.

If you don't believe this, just visit a plant where this irradiation occurs. You won't see the employees standing around the chicken as it gets exposed to cesium isotopes.

Ms. Mann is correct when she states that the process does not generate waste. Food irradiation is a ruse to find a place to dump the tons of radioactive waste produced by nuclear reactors.

I don't think the public is getting the whole story on food irradiation. For example, what are the long-term effects? Can the digestive system assimilate foods that have been altered by the irradiating process? I don't care to be a guin ea pig just so that an apple can sit forever on a shelf without rotting. If the bacteria doesn't want it, then neither do I.

—Ken Vatter, Centereach, NY

#### Honey is heavy; metric is muddling

Molly Stevens' measuring lesson (Basics, *Fine Cooking* #13, p. 68) was an excellent refresher course for all serious cooks. Not discussed, how-

ever, was honey, a frequent problem ingredient. Honey is *not* a mediumdensity liquid (like milk, water, or oil), and that's why there are generally 13 ounces of honey to the cup, not 8, as we might expect. Honey is also sweeter per cup than sugar and is slightly more caloric.

I also greatly appreciated the sidebar in the same piece called "Read the Recipe for Measuring Clues." Unfortunately, I've found that dismally few recipes are correctly written with respect to measuring before or after trimming, chopping, etc. Fine Cooking is a happy exception.

Finally, a note on measuring cups: Either there is a subtle campaign being waged to force me to go metric, or Pyrex prefers lefties. I use a standard glass cup and always hold it by its handle with my left hand, pouring the liquid to be measured with my right. Facing me are many metric measurements, and as my middle-aged mind is still stubbornly nonmetric, I squint to read the ounces on the opposite side.

—Susan Asanovic, MSRD, Wilton, CT



#### Scales beat measuring cups; metric is marvelous

Bravo and thank you, thank you to Molly Stevens for her article on the importance of weighing ingredients (Basics, *Fine Cooking #13*, p. 68). As she points out, a cup of flour depends on how one gets the flour into the cup—it may weigh as little as 4 ounces or as much as 6½ ounces. It also depends on where one buys the measuring cup because not all measuring cups are created equal.

Weighing ingredients eliminates inconsistencies and would help both beginning and seasoned bakers get better results. The next step

is winning people over to the metric system. It's so much more logical!

—Fran Gage, San Francisco, CA

# Cooking moist brown bread on a cozy wood stove

I am thoroughly enjoying my subscription to Fine Cooking, and I find myself thumbing through the magazine on weekends looking for something new and interesting to try. Last weekend was typically cold in the north country, and Judy Monroe's article on brown bread caught my eye (Fine Cooking #13, p. 51). Instead of using conventional appliances for the steaming, I thought I would try to harness some of the energy from our wood stove. I pulled out my large roasting pan, placed a rack in it, and added water to the height of the rack. While I was mixing the batter, I set the roasting

pan on the wood stove to sim-

mer. The mold fit nicely in the

roaster, and exactly three hours later, the brown bread

was ready—to perfection.

The bread is delicious, and

after reviewing the ingredi-

ents. I realized that it has ab-

solutely no added fat!

—Linda Locascio, Essex, NY ◆

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for fellow enthusiasts

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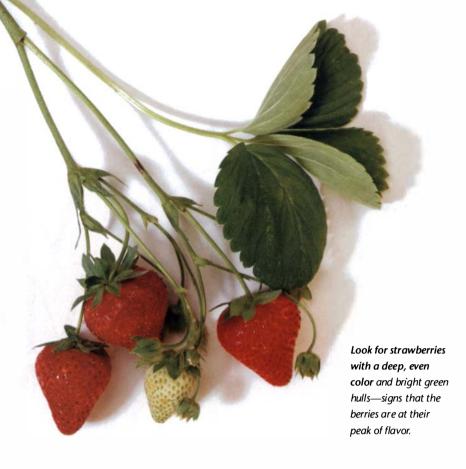
Only in Puerto Rico is aging guaranteed by law.



# Berries Are Summer at Its Best

A sweet perfume is your best clue to flavor

BY SALLY SMALL



y brothers and I spent our childhood summers in the Sierra Nevadas, and that is where I met the luscious little wild strawberry. Black raspberries are We'd crawl along the forest smaller, seedier, and a bit floor, our noses to the ground, less sweet than their brightly colored trying to beat the blue jays and cousins. Some berry lovers prefer them the black bears to the first ripe cooked rather than fresh. berries of the season. Golden raspberries, exceptionally juicy and sweet, are considered by

many to be the best raspberry of all.

Strawberries are the first berries of spring, followed by raspberries early in summer. June is the peak of raspberry season. A delectable second pick of raspberries comes in autumn, the last taste of summer before pears and persimmons come into season.

Blackberries are best in midsummer. Early picks tend to be tart, and late-summer blackberries can be dried out and tasteless.

Commercial blueberries are readily available from May through September. The peak of the season in Oregon and New

Jersey is July. Further north, the harvests in Washington state, Michigan, and Massachusetts tend to peak in August. Doubtless there are cooks whose childhood summers were spent on blueberry hills in Maine or Minnesota. They know what a blueberry should taste like—nothing like the obese, domesticated varieties found in the supermarkets. For a true blueberry, it's worth cultivating a friend with a berry bush or seeking out a pick-your-own farm near your home. Look for a silvery finish on blueberries, the mark of freshness.

Shop for berries with your nose. Whatever type of berry you're buying, pick the plumpest, most fragrant on es. They should be firm with an even color. If no one's looking, sneak a taste before you buy.

Learn which varieties are locally grown. They're likely to be sweeter and juicier than those that are bred for shipping. The sad fact is that ripe



#### 80% Of Your Health Problems Are Probably Caused By Your Favorite Foods.

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Look for blueberries with a silvery finish a sian that they're fresh and full of flavor.

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basket. With the exception of strawberries, which get mushy, berries freeze well.

> There are many ways to enjoy a berry, but perhaps none better than to simply pop one into your mouth moment after you've picked it yourself on a perfect summer day. But there are plenty of wonderful ways to enjoy those berries that do make the trip back to

goodness of berries than the British dessert known as summer pudding—sweetened berries packed in a tall breadlined mold and served with Devonshire cream.

Berries are for the summer opportunist. When you discover a basket of fragrant, ripe berries, gather them up and celebrate. Who knows when you may meet another?

Sally Small hunts for berries in Walnut Grove, California.

Outside's in. Which is why there's more reason than ever to try pork on the grill. Once you do, you may never go inside again. For recipes, send a self-addressed, stamped, business-size envelope to Recipes Ad, Box 10383, Des Moines, IA 50306. Or visit us at http://www.nppc.org/



TERIYAKI PORK CHOPS

4 America's Cut™ (1-1/2-inch-thick boneless center loin chop)

1 cup teriyaki marinade

1 tsp hot pepper sauce (optional)

1/4 cup chopped green onions

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl or a plastic bag, and marinate from 30 minutes to overnight in the refrigerator.
Remove chops and grill directly over hot coals for 12-15 minutes, turning once. Serves 4.



Approximate nutrient information per serving: Calories: 261, Protein: 36 gm., Fat: 11 gm., Cholesterol: 105 mg., Sodium: 710 mg. Nutrient analysis done by The Food Processor II Diet Analysis Software. Pork data from the USDA Handbook 8-10 (1991). America's Pork Producers © 1996 National Pork Producers Council in cooperation with the National Pork Board.



YOU MAY WONDER WHY YOU DON'T **EAT OUT** MORE OFTEN.

TASTE
WHAT'S
NEXT

pork
The Other White Meat

Delicious dried beans from "The Bean Queen"

Elizabeth Berry, a farmer in northern New Mexico who supplies specialty produce to many of Santa Fe's best restaurants, has come to be known as "the Bean Queen," and for good reason. Berry has grown hundreds of varieties of beans in her search for the best, and she markets about two dozen of her favorites, all available through the mail. I tried several kinds and was impressed—in some cases, amazed.

I started with her flageolets (pronounced fla-zhoh-LAY), the delicious pale green and white beans that, though indigenous to the United States, have become integral to French cuisine. I sometimes find them in gourmet markets, but they're quite expensive. Berry's flageolets (like all her beans) are \$4 per pound, making them a bargain. I cooked my mail-order flageolets and tossed them warm with a red-wine vinaigrette, chopped red onion, and parsley for a delicious light salad.

Next I tried Berry's scarlet runner beans, which are especially beautiful: deep lavender and purple mottled with black. These large, meaty beans are suitable for stews or ragoûts. I simmered mine in chicken stock with chopped tomatoes and onions, which made a filling main course.

The most exotic beans I tried were the flor de mayo beans, a Mexican bush bean. They're the best dried beans I've ever tasted. These small, light-maroon beans have a slightly sweet, almost nutty flavor and a wonderful, smooth texture. Berry said that they might have a mild smokiness to them, so I tossed them with a little butter and cilantro, which was all the dressing up these flavorful beans needed.

All the beans I received were in excellent condition, with so few cracked or broken ones that they really didn't need to be picked over.

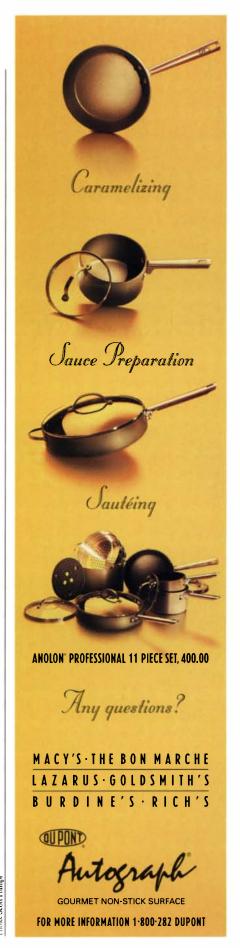


Because Berry is always trying new varieties of beans, those she offers change from time to time. For a brochure and order form, send \$1 and a self-addressed business-sized envelope to Elizabeth Berry, Gallina Canyon Ranch, PO Box 706, Abiquiu, NM 87510. Judith Sutton is a food writer based in New York City. She has worked as a cook and pastry chef at several Manhattan restaurants.

# Cooking school guide goes online

The Guide to Cooking Schools, an annual publication that lists over 750 career, nonvocational, and vacation programs, has gone online. Internet users can visit the Guide's Web site for information and descriptions of schools listed in the Guide. (The address is http://www.shawguides. com.) You can search for schools by name, state, country, or type of program. The site also features a news page, a book ordering form, an international list of booksellers that carry the paperback Guide, and descriptions of more than 50 food and wine publications, with hypertext links to those publications that are available online.

For those who prefer books to electronics, the *Guide* sells for \$19.95 in bookstores. Or send a check or money order for \$22.95 (which includes \$3 shipping) to ShawGuides, PO Box 1295, Ansonia Station, New York, NY 10023; 212/799-6464. For credit card orders, call 800/247-6553. *Joanne McAllister Smart is an associate editor for* Fine Cooking.



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The non-stick gourmets look up to.

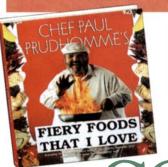
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#### What are the first ingredients of any delicious meal?





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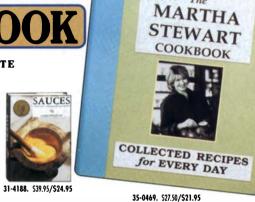
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92-8937. \$25/\$21.95



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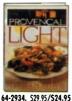
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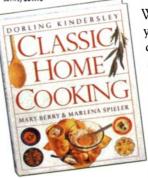
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06470-5506, and we'll try to find a cooking professional with the answer.

#### Which grade of olive oil?

What's the difference between "virgin" and "extravirgin" olive oil?

> —Penny Golabek, Bakersville, NC

Maggie Blyth Klein replies:

While there are definite grades of olive oil, "virgin" is no longer a meaningful term. The International Olive Oil Council, which developed the oil grading system we see on European labels, recognizes only three grades of olive oil extra-virgin, bure, and pomace. These grades are made from successive pressings and are based on the oil's flavor and acidity level: olives contain several different kinds of acids, and too much of some of them can indicate rotten, bruised, over-

Extra-virgin olive oil is produced from the first cold pressing—the first oil that the olives release when being processed without heat. It contains very little acid and has absolutely no off flavors.

ripe, or otherwise compro-

mised olives.

Pure olive oil is then produced by a heat process that further extracts oil from the olives. This oil contains more acids, which must be chemically removed for the oil to be edible. A small amount of extra-virgin oil is added to the bland, colorless, pure oil to give it flavor.

Pomace oil is a heatprocessed oil made from the pulp of previously processed olives. It's rare to see pomace oil sold in the United States.

This grading system originated in Europe, where most



Read the label to determine differences among olive oils.

olive oil is produced; however, California is starting to offer a number of well-made oils that compete with the imports, and their producers use a labeling system very similar to that of the Council. Maggie Blyth Klein is a coowner of Oliveto, a restaurant in Oakland, California. She is the author of The Feast of the Olive (Chronide Books, 1983).

#### What is that scum I'm skimming?

I was taught to skim off the white froth that rises to the surface when I make stock. What is that froth, and why does it need to be skimmed?

—Chris Beckett, Austin, TX

Molly Stevens replies: The white froth that rises to the

top of your stock contains coagulated albumin proteins and fat that are released from the bones, blood, and meat. If left in the stock, they'll make it look muddy and taste greasy.

For a really clear stock, start with cold water and slowly bring the stock to a simmer. This way, the stock is easy to skim because the proteins coagulate in large clumps that rise to the top. Starting with hot water or reaching a boil too rapidly causes the proteins to form very fine particles that won't float to the top and that will then cloud your stock.

The most important time to skim is during the first 45 minutes, when a thick, foamy crust appears on the surface. Be sure to keep the stock at a simmer; if it boils, the impurities will churn back into the liquid and create a cloudy, bitter-tasting stock. After the initial skim, skimming once every 30 minutes or so should be sufficient. Molly Stevens, a contributing editor for Fine Cooking, is a chef/instructor at the New England Culinary Institute in Essex, Vermont.

#### Freezing cooked pasta

Does cooked pasta respond well to freezing? If so, what's the best way to freeze it?

—Elizabeth Nodal, Miami Beach, FL

Bonnie Lee Black replies: Cooked pasta responds well to freezing if it has been combined with sauce in a casserole, such as lasagne. Preparing a pasta casserole ahead in a freezer-to-ovento-table baking dish can be

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enormously helpful in streamlining home cooking.

It hardly makes sense, though, to freeze plain, undressed, cooked pasta: the texture would be compromised, and in the time it takes to reheat the frozen pasta, you can boil a fresh batch. Bonnie Lee Black teaches pasta workshops at Peter Kump's New York Cooking School.

# Measuring power in gas and electric ranges

Gas is measured in Btu and electricity in watts. I'm buying a new range. How do I make a comparison?

—I.J. Reiley, New Orleans, LA

#### Carolyn Verweyst replies:

There is no direct comparison to be made between watts and Btu (which stands for British thermal units). A Btu measures the actual amount of heat that the gas burners produce, while watts represent the amount of energy that's being used.

For electric ranges, small elements should use between 1250 and 1500 watts, while large elements should use between 2100 and 2600 watts. Gas burners on a standard range can put out anywhere between 7000 and

12,000 Btu, depending on the size and configuration of the burner and whether the range uses natural gas or propane.

Generally, electric ranges don't offer as much power as gas ranges. That's because the amount of heat a pan receives depends on how well the pan makes contact with the coil, plate, or cooktop. If the pan's base has become beaten up or warped with age, the contact will be poor and the pan won't receive all of the range's heat.

Gas ranges, however, offer "flexible" heat because a gas flame can compensate for any irregularities in the pan's surface. The flame can also extend past the base of the pan and curve around its edge, providing even greater heat. Carolyn Verweyst is the public relations coordinator for Whirlpool in Benton Harbor, Michigan.

#### What is Irish moss?

At the International Food Market in Atlanta, I saw a package of Irish moss. What is it, and what do you do with it?

—Valerie J. Harris, Flowery Branch, GA

Robb Walsh replies: Irish moss is a stringy, edible seaweed. It grows in the water and washes up on beaches, including the Jamaican coastline,

where it's collected to be used in an astonishing array of homemade health tonics. Irish moss isn't really an exotic ingredient, however; it's also known as carrageen, a natural thickener used in many foods.

I've drunk many Jamaican health tonics that contained Irish moss, but I can't say what the moss tastes like. Irish moss is probably appreciated for its gelling properties, since most Jamaicans want their tonics almost milkshake-thick. The drinks, however, are considered to be more of an herbal remedy than a food. Depending on who you ask, Irish moss is reputed to have a number of benefits. The tonics are sold under an amazing variety of "brand names." At Ragamuffin's Tonic Stand in Faiths Penn, Jamaica, you can buy tonics named Disturbance. Agony, and Okra Slime. Robb Walsh is a freelance food writer in Austin, Texas. His latest book is Island Heat: Hot & Spicy Cooking of the Caribbean (Crossing Press, 1996).

# Why cinnamon breads don't rise as high

When I bake breads that have cinnamon worked into the dough, I don't get a high rise. A friend told me that it's because cinnamon is a bark, and the bark inhibits the yeast's growth. Is this true?

—Butterfli O'Shea Cuyahoga Falls, OH

Maggie Glezer replies: First off, you should know that the cinnamon you buy at the supermarket is not true Ceylon cinnamon (Cinnamomum zevlanicum), but cassia or Chinese cinnamon (C. cassia). Cassia contains twice as much essential oil as true cinnamon and is thus more pungent (aficionados claim that the flavor of true cinnamon is more subtle and complex). Both spices come from the dried inner bark of an evergreen tree in the laurel family. The U.S. government standard for cinnamon allows for both spices to be labeled as "cinnamon."

Cinnamon (meaning both true cinnamon and cassia) does reduce the volume of yeasts breads, but not because it is a bark. Rather, it's because a compound in its essential oil called cinnamic aldehyde is toxic to yeast. Other "sweet" brown spices, such as cloves, nutmeg, and allspice, also contain yeast toxins and should be treated similarly.

Researchers at McCormick have found that you can add ¾ teaspoon of spice for every 2 cups flour to yeast doughs without reducing the bread's volume too drastically. Most professional bakers, however, prefer to use these spices only in toppings or fillings, and not directly in their doughs.

Another solution is to grind your own spices. The grind will be much coarser than can be achieved industrially, so any potential toxins will be less likely to come in contact with the yeast. Best of all, the bread's spice flavor will be wonderfully fresh and vibrant.

Maggie Glezer teaches and writes about breadmaking in Atlanta. ◆



The power ratings of gas and electric ranges are not directly comparable.



#### Chunky Veggie Hummus

- 2-15 oz. cans Eden Navy Beans, drained
- 2 tablespoons Eden Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 tablespoon Eden Soy Sauce (Shoyu or Tamari)
- 1 tablespoon Eden Brown Rice Vinegar (or any quality vinegar)
- 3-4 cloves garlic, chopped ½ lemon, juiced
- 1 tooonson souch
- 1 teaspoon cayenne
- 1 tablespoon fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1-15 oz. can Eden Diced Tomatoes with Green Chilies, drained
- 3 green onions, chopped

Blend first 7 ingredients in a food processor or blender until smooth. Fold in tomatoes and green onions.

Variation: ½ cup chopped sweet pepper or red onion can be added to this delicious spread or dip.

Serve with pita bread, crackers, raw vegetables, or chips.

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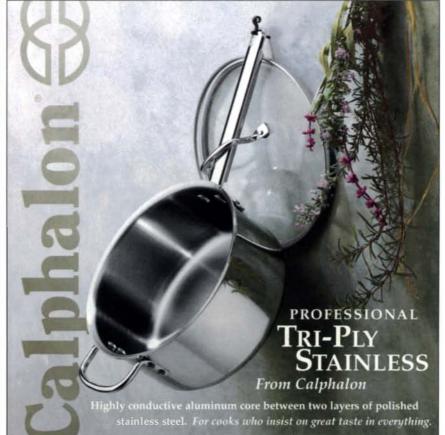
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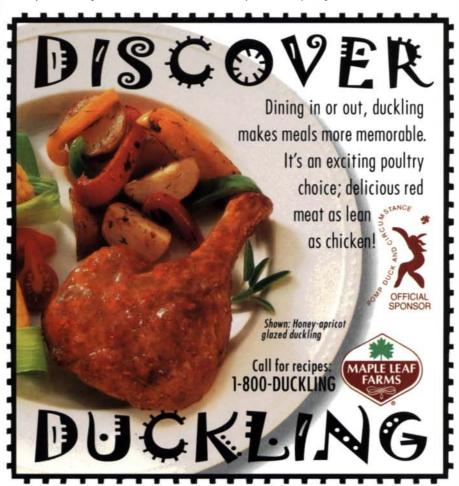
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Little nests of fettuccine store neatly. Dried, the pasta will keep for months.

# Making Machine-Rolled Pasta

With a basic pasta machine, you can have homemade pasta in no time

BY GIULIANO HAZAN

Making homemade pasta may seem like a daunting endeavor, requiring a great deal of effort and hours of work. But in fact, with a simple hand-crank pasta machine to roll the dough into thin sheets, you can make excellent homemade pasta quickly and with little effort.

Pasta made at home from eggs and flour absorbs sauces beautifully. Its delicate flavor and softer texture allow mildly flavored sauces to show off, and it works exceptionally well with butter- and creambased sauces.

#### THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF THE RIGHT FLOUR

Fresh eggs and all-purpose flour, preferably unbleached, are all you need to make egg pasta. Semolina—flour made from durum wheat—isn't appropriate for egg pasta because it's too hard. Semolina

is used in factory-made flourand-water pastas, such as spaghetti, penne, and rigatoni. The dough for these pastas needs to be very firm because it's extruded through metal dies to get its shape.

Egg pasta dough, on the other hand, should be tender and malleable so that it can be rolled out into thin sheets. This gradual stretching produces a dough that's much more delicate and absorbent

than that of flour-and-water pastas.

For each large serving of pasta, use one large egg and about ¾ cup flour (you may not need all of it). The amount of flour you use will vary. The size of your eggs, the character of your flour, and the humidity level in your kitchen may require that you use more or less flour. By making the dough on a countertop instead of in a bowl, you

#### Simple steps to fresh pasta



Make a well with the flour and break the eggs into it. Beat the eggs and then gradually mix in flour until the mixture is no longer runny.



Push aside a little flour and quickly bring the remaining flour over the egg mixture. Don't hesitate or you'll lose some of the egg mixture.



Work the the eggs and flour with your hands until all the flour is mixed with the eggs. Use the flour you'd pushed aside, if necessary.



To knead, fold the dough almost in half, push it down and away from you, and give it a quarter turn. Repeat until the dough is smooth.



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#### Let your pasta machine do the work



After letting the dough rest, divide it into as many pieces as the number of eggs you used. Flatten a piece with your hand and roll it through the machine at its widest setting.



Fold the dough in three and run it through again with the folds perpendicular to the roller. Fold again and run it through again; do this three or four times until the dough is smooth.



Run the dough—not folded through the rollers once at each setting until you reach the thinnest setting on the machine. Let the sheets dry until they feel leathery.



Cut the sheets into 12-inch lengths and, for fettuccine, run them through the cutting rollers of the machine. Or cut the sheets by hand into any shape you want.

can keep a little of the flour on the side as you begin working the dough with your hands and add more flour as needed.

#### KNEADING IS THE KEY

Kneading the dough by hand creates enough gluten to make the dough stretch without overworking it, which can happen in a food processor. Because cold temperatures will reduce the elasticity of the dough, you should never make or knead the dough on an inherently cold surface, such as marble or stainless steel. Egg pasta dough is traditionally kneaded on a wooden surface, but many synthetic surfaces work just as well.

Stretch, don't compress, the dough. Hold the dough with one hand while folding it over with the other. With the heel of your palm, push the dough down and away from you. Rotate the dough a quarter turn. Repeat the foldpush-turn process until the dough becomes a smooth and homogeneous mass.

After kneading, wrap the dough in plastic and let it rest

at least 20 minutes. As it rests, the gluten relaxes, making it easier to stretch the dough when rolling it out.

#### ROLLING TO STRETCH THE DOUGH

A rolling pin in the hands of an expert pasta maker undoubtedly stretches the dough better than any machine can,

Egg pasta's
delicate flavor
and softer texture
allow mildly
flavored sauces
to show off.

but hand-rolling is a craft that requires considerable practice and patience to master. Seeing a *sfoglina* (a professional pasta maker) transform a ball of dough into a paper-thin round sheet more than three feet in diameter is a bit like watching a master juggler perform. Fortunately, thinning the dough with a pasta machine will

make good fresh pasta with a taste that's pasta that infinitely superior to what those electric one-step machines produce.

Be sure to put the dough through each setting on the machine. If you try to speed the process by getting to the thinnest setting in only two or three steps, you'll break the structure of the pasta and ruin its texture.

Once you've reached the thinnest setting on the machine, lay the sheets of pasta on clean towels and let them dry partially before cutting, so the noodles don't stick together when cut. Some people sprinkle additional flour on the sheets to prevent sticking. Try to avoid this or you may taste the raw flour. You can cut the pasta with the machine or with a sharp knife. Once you cut the pasta, you can cook it right away or allow it to dry completely. Store dried pasta in a cool, dry cabinet.

#### HOMEMADE PASTA COOKS QUICKLY

To cook your pasta, bring a generous amount of water to a boil, add about one table-

spoon of salt per gallon of water, and slide in the pasta. It will cook quickly—in three minutes or less—especially if you use it right away before it has dried completely. Drain it, toss it with your sauce, and buon appetito!

Giuliano Hazan is a cooking instructor and the author of The Classic Pasta Cookbook (Dorling Kindersley, 1993).



Wrap the leathery pasta ribbons loosely around your hand to make little nests.

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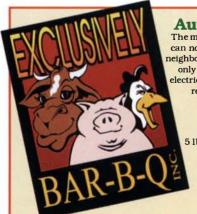
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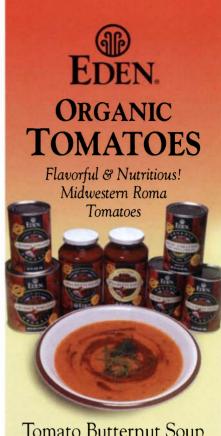
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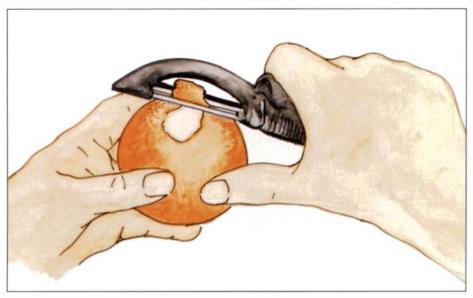
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Use a vegetable peeler and a gentle sawing motion to remove citrus zest.

#### Easy citrus zesting

Grating orange or lemon zest can be a lot of work, but I think I have an easier method. I use a sharp vegetable peeler and a gentle sawing motion (this is important) to cut away thin strips of citrus peel. I know I'm being gentle enough if I don't get any of the white pith, which is bitter.

To chop the zest, I first cut the peel into strips and add a little salt (if the recipe is savory) or sugar (if the recipe is sweet). The salt or sugar provides friction for the chopping process (either with a knife or in an electric spice grinder), and it also absorbs the zest's oils, so less flavor is lost.

—Russ Shumaker, Richmond, VA

#### Water bottle for accessible oils

I've come up with a way to waste less plastic and at the same time to simplify the way I sauté and fry. I buy my favorite oils in economical one-gallon containers and pour them into small water

bottles—the kind with a pull stop on top. This lets me squirt the exact amount of oil into the pan without waste or mess. It also makes measuring into a teaspoon much easier.

> —Rory Pearse, Woodside, NY

#### Soak mushrooms overnight

If you soak dried mushrooms overnight in cold water—as opposed to a quick soak in hot water—the depth of flavor achieved by both mushroom and soaking liquid is extraordinary.

> —Barbara Tropp, China Moon Cafe, San Francisco, CA

# Keep favorite recipes at eye level

I tape often-used recipes to the inside of the cupboard doors above the kitchen counter. This keeps the recipes at eye level and ready to use.

> —Peg Boren, McAllen, TX

#### Freezer bags best for pounding meat

When I pound boneless meats such as chicken breasts or veal cutlets, I find that putting the meat inside a gallon-size plastic freezer bag is much better than using sheets of plastic wrap. The bag is stronger than the plastic wrap, and it will contain any excess liquid or bits of meat. Eventhe pounding tool stays clean.

—John Wilson, Houston, TX

#### Clarify butter in the oven

It's easy to clarify butter in the oven. Put a pound of butter in an ovenproof dish that's fairly deep and not too wide. (I use a soufflé dish.) Put the dish into a 300°F oven for 1 hour. The butter will slowly melt, leaving you with clear yellow clarified butter on top and white milk solids at the bottom. Spoon off the butter, and it's ready to use.

—Jan Darbhamulla, Newark, CA



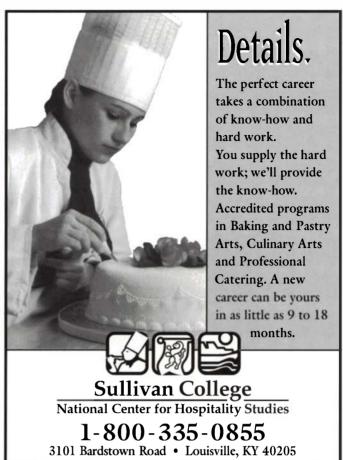
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llustrations: Rosalie Vacci









# Meat pounder quietly crushes peppercorns

For coarsely ground peppercorns, forget the hard-toresults, however, by simply wetting my hand and running it down the length of the loaf before putting it in the oven. This technique pro-



Use a meat mallet to gently, quietly crush peppercorns.

control method of crushing them under a pan or pot. There's a way to use your meat pounder—quietly—to crush peppercorns.

Group the peppercorns on your cutting board. With one hand on the handle and the other hand on the head of the pounder, slowly press a flat side of the head on the peppercorns, crushing them with the edge. Repeat this process, working toward you and across the peppercorns. This crushing tool is much easier to hold, and it lets you see what you're doing.

—Keith Masumoto, Chicago, IL

# Use a wet hand to create a brown and crunchy crust

To bake bread with a crisp crust, many recipes suggest creating steam by spraying the oven with water at the beginning of baking or setting a simmering pan of water in the oven. I've gotten the best

vides the perfect amount of evenly applied moisture to create steam, and it produces a more uniformly browned crust.

> —Mebeier @aol.com via Internet

#### Damp paper towels help create fat-free stock

I have a fuss-free method for removing excess fat from homemade stock. Allow the stock to cool a bit and then pour it through a strainer lined with a double layer of wet paper towels. This leaves most of the fat behind in the paper towels and cuts the amount of fat left in the stock to a bare minimum.

—Jim Brookshire, Ontario, CA

# Homemade one-step coating for cake pans

Here's a simple recipe for a one-step nonstick cake-pan coating that turns the messy task of greasing and flouring cake pans into a tidy, onestep process. Mix 1 cup vegetable shortening with ½ cup all-purpose flour and ½ cup vegetable oil in an electric mixer. Transfer it to a plastic container. To use, just spread the mixture in the cake pan with a pastry brush or paper towel. It keeps indefinitely, and doesn't need to be refrigerated.

> —Janice Watt, Woonsocket, RI

# Use an ice-cream scoop for muffin and cookie batter

For uniform and professionallooking cookies and muffins, use an ice-cream scoop. It saves time, makes equal portions, and is much neater than scraping batter off a spoon.

> —Lisa Jung, San Rafael, CA

#### Use a ladle for faster straining

The process of putting food through a strainer goes much faster when you press a metal ladle against the solids and move the ladle in a circular motion.

> —Terry Hahn, Boston, MA

#### Tossing lettuce for drier greens

If you put washed and dried greens in the salad bowl and discover they're still a little damp, put a paper towel in each hand and toss the undressed greens. The paper towels will absorb the last bits of moisture.

—Judy McCarthy, Galveston, TX

### Dusting cake pans with sugar

For a light, sugary glaze on my layer cakes, I dust greased

cake pans with granulated sugar instead of flour.

—Suzan L. Wiener, Spring Hill, FL

#### Jar opener also unwraps garlic cloves

A flat rubber jar opener makes a great garlic-clove peeler. Just put unpeeled cloves on a firm surface, lay the jar opener on top, and roll the cloves back and forth a few times. The cloves pop out of their skin intact and unblemished.

—Janet C. deCarteret, Bellevue, WA

#### Zip-top bag defats stock

If you need to quickly defat soup or stock, fill a one-gallon zip-top plastic freezer bag with the warm liquid. Refrigerate the bag for 10 minutes to allow the fat to rise to the top. Hold the bag over a large



A zip-top bag lets you defat stock quickly.

bowl, snip one corner from the bottom of the bag, and let the stock pour into the bowl. When you get to the layer of fat, pinch the corner shut. The fat remains in the bag and can be thrown away.

> —Ray L. Overton III, Atlanta, GA ◆

## Where

# Diamond Walnuts go

#### for the summer.

Diamond Walnuts recently sighted:

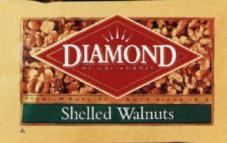
Dazzling a pasta salad primavera.

Infiltrating a fresh berry crisp.

Surprising ripe tomatoes

and feta tossed with vinaigrette.

And taking green beans on quite a vacation.



DIAMOND WALNUTS Imagine where they can take you."

#### WALNUT STUDDED GREEN BEANS

3/4 cup large pieces Diamond Walnuts

3/4 lb green beans, halved

1/4 tsp salt

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

1-1/2 tsp olive oil

4 slices turkey bacon, cooked crisp (1/2" pieces)

1/2 cup thinly sliced red bell pepper (optional)

Toast walnuts: spread on baking sheet. Bake 8-10 min. at 350° F, turning often. Place beans and salt in skillet with 1/4 cup water. Cover and cook over medium-high heat 3-4 min. or until beans are tender-crisp. Drain. Add garlic, olive oil, turkey bacon, bell pepper, and walnuts. Cook uncovered, stirring frequently 2-3 minutes. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

# Making Vibrant Mediterranean Bread Salads

Toss peak-of-the-season vegetables, fragrant olive oil, and yesterday's bread for some spectacular summer salads

#### BY JOANNE WEIR

he first time you eat a bread salad, you'll wonder why you've never had one before. Imagine a sandwich of ripe tomatoes, crisp cucumbers, thin slices of sweet onion, and sprigs of fresh herbs between thick slices of a chewy, European-style bread. Then imagine tearing that sandwich into pieces, dousing it with vinegar and fragrant olive oil, and tossing it all together in a bowl, and you'll have an idea of the irresistible combination of textures and flavors that are found in bread salads. In the Mediterranean, bread salads have been around for centuries. They're part of a culture that knows well how to make a feast from the humblest of foods, even stale bread.

#### A STURDY LOAF FOR A HEARTY SALAD

When making bread salad, no ingredient is more important than the bread itself. Bread salads were born of the rustic loaves characteristic of the Mediterranean. You should look for the same style of loaf when making your bread salads. You need a sturdy, flavorful loaf that can stand up to a vinaigrette and other wet ingredients like tomatoes without turning to mush. This is no place for plastic-wrapped overprocessed white bread.

Fresh bread can ruin a bread salad. It becomes soggy too quickly. Be sure your bread is sufficiently stale—at least three days old. When I'm craving a bread salad and the only bread in the house is fresh, I cheat and dry the bread in the oven. I just tear the bread into pieces, spread them on a baking sheet in a single layer, and put them into a 375°F oven until dry, about 10 minutes. Don't put a loaf in the oven



"Bread salad is strictly summer food," says author Joanne Weir. "Use only the freshest vegetables—the ripest, sweetest tomatoes and the most fragrant herbs."







The bread for panzanella should be stale but not dried out. Reconstitute it slightly by sprinkling the slices with water and letting them stand for about 20 minutes.

whole and try to tear it after it comes out—the bread will shatter into crumbs.

The kind of bread you use depends on the type of salad you're making. The Italian bread salad known as panzanella is best made with a dark, chewy, lightly salted loaf, but any rustic, Italianstyle bread will do. In the Mideast, stale rounds of pita bread are made into the salad that goes by the name fattoush. I use sourdough when making zeytin ekmek salatasi, the bread salad that's characteristic of Turkey.

While the bread should be old, the vegetables for bread salad must be absolutely fresh. At my house, bread salad is strictly summer food, made with only peak-of-the-season vegetables—the ripest, sweetest tomatoes and the most fragrant fresh herbs. The only dressing for these salads is made from good-quality oil and vinegar or lemon juice and the juices from the vegetables themselves.



**Fresh mint is the final touch**. This Turkish bread salad is best when you prepare the vegetables first and let the flavors meld before adding the torn bread.



**Gently squeeze out the excess water** as you tear the bread into bite-size pieces. Don't be too zealous, though, or the bread will fall apart.

#### **RECIPES FROM AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN**

Italy's much-loved *panzanella* is made with ingredients we all associate with that country—ripe tomatoes, garlic, red-wine vinegar, and fresh basil.

Fattoush, the bread salad from Lebanon and Syria, is similar to panzanella but made with ingredients more closely related to the Middle East. Instead of a hearty Tuscan loaf, fattoush is always made with pita bread. Green peppers, and sometime radishes, are added along with tomatoes and cucumbers. Parsley, mint, and cilantro replace the basil of the Italian version, scallions take the place of red onions, and lemon juice is used in the dressing instead of vinegar.

Some purists believe that *fattoush* just isn't *fattoush* without purslane and sumac, which give it a distinctly Mideastern flavor. Purslane grows as a weed in many gardens but isn't often found in markets. The tender shoots have a mildly sour taste. If purslane grows in your yard, by all means add it. Sumac, a dark berry with a slightly acidic, astringent flavor, is available in Mideastern markets and can be ordered from Penzeys, Ltd. (414/574-0277).

This version of a Turkish bread salad is made with sourdough and dry-cured black olives. I first combine the tomatoes, onion, olives, lemon juice, olive oil, salt, and pepper and let these ingredients stand for about an hour so that all the flavors can meld. At the last minute, I add the torn bread and garnish the salad with fresh mint.

#### **Turkish Bread & Olive Salad**

This salad was inspired by a friend of mine from Istanbul, Angel Stoyanof. The intense flavor of the black olives is well balanced by the lemon juice and fresh mint. Serves six to eight.

1 lb. ripe tomatoes (about 3), cut into ½-inch dice, reserving as much of the juice and seeds as possible
1 medium red onion (4 to 5 oz.), cut into ½-inch dice
1 cup pitted dry-cured black olives, chopped coarse
¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil



Salt and freshly ground black pepper ½ lb. coarse-textured sourdough bread, 3 to 4 days old 1/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh mint

In a large bowl, combine the tomatoes, their seeds and juice, the onion, olives, lemon juice, olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix well and let stand at room temperature until the flavors meld, about 1 hour.

Tear the bread into approximately 1-inch pieces. Just before serving, add the bread to the tomato mixture and toss well. Sprinkle with mint and serve immediately.

#### **Panzanella**

(Italian bread salad)

Capers, celery, anchovies, hard-cooked eggs, and tuna are also delicious additions to this salad. Serves four to six.

½ lb. Italian bread, 3 to 4 days old, cut into 1-inch thick slices 1/2 cup cold water

1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded, and cut into ½-inch cubes Salt

1/4 cup plus 1 Tbs. red-wine vinegar

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Freshly ground black pepper

 $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 lb. ripe tomatoes (about 5), seeded and cut into

1/2-inch cubes 1 medium red onion (4 to 5 oz.), cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice 1/2 cup loosely packed fresh basil leaves, torn

on paper towels to dry slightly, about 20 min.

Sprinkle the bread with the water and let stand about 2 min. Gently squeeze the bread dry as you tear it into roughly 1-inch pieces. Spread the pieces of torn bread

Meanwhile, spread the cucumber pieces on a paper towel and sprinkle with salt. Let stand about 20 min. to extract the bitter juices. Put the cucumbers in a strainer and rinse with cold water. Pat dry.

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the vinegar, garlic, and olive oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Add the cucumbers, tomatoes, onions, torn basil, and the bread. Toss to combine and let stand until the bread has absorbed some of the vinaigrette, about 20 min.

#### **Fattoush**

(Middle Eastern bread salad)

If your bread isn't sufficiently stale, add it at the last minute and serve the salad immediately. Serves six to eight.

2 large stale pita breads, torn into 1-inch pieces 1 medium cucumber, peeled, seeded, and cut into ½-inch cubes Salt

1 lb. ripe tomatoes (about 3), seeded and cut into ½-inch cubes 6 scallions, cut into 1/4-inch slices

1 green bell pepper, cut into ½-inch cubes

1/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh parsley

1/3 cup coarsely chopped fresh mint

3 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh cilantro

2 large cloves garlic, minced

1/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Freshly ground black pepper

2 tsp. crushed sumac (optional)

Heat oven to 375°F. Spread the torn pita on a baking sheet in a single layer and bake until dry, 10 to 15 min. Cool.

Spread the cucumber pieces on a paper towel and sprinkle with salt. Let stand to extract the bitter juices, about 20 min. Put the cucumbers in a strainer and rinse with cold water. Pat dry. In a large mixing bowl, combine the cucumbers, tomatoes, scallions, green pepper, parsley, mint, and cilantro.

Whisk together the garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Toss this dressing with the vegetables; toss in the bread. Spread the salad on a serving platter and sprinkle with sumac, if using.

Joanne Weir, a chef and cooking teacher, is the author of From Tapas to Meze: First Courses from the Mediterranean Shores (Crown, 1994). ◆



Crisp, not tough, is the texture you want for the bread in fattoush. Toast the stale pita before adding it to this Middle Eastern bread salad.

Fresh mint, parsley, and cilantro and a tangy lemon dressing give fattoush a distinctly Middle Eastern flavor.



# Photos: Mark Thom

# A Backyard Barbecue, North Carolina Style

When it comes to cooking Carolina's pork barbecue, slow is the only way to go

BY SCOTT HOWELL



**Nothing fancy, but boy, it's good.** With its spicy sauce, Carolina pork barbecue tastes great on a plain white bun.

36

**MENU** 

Carolina Barbecued Pork

Roasted Corn

Overnight Slaw with Mustard Seed

Roasted New Potato Salad with Dijon & Rosemary

Cinnamon-Cornbread Cobbler with Blueberries

ontroversy over the right way to make pork barbecue smolders in the Carolinas, wafting like smoke from the grill throughout backyards, picnic grounds, and barbecue shacks. Locals in both North and South Carolina love this dish—succulent pork drenched in tangy sauce and piled on a bun—but no one seems to agree on exactly what Carolina barbecue is. And their love for the stuff is in direct proportion to their vehemence: "You must use hickory." "Nonsense. Just shove it in the oven." "Vinegar sauce is the only true Carolina sauce." "Vinegar? You must mean mustard...and don't even think about adding a tomato." People can't even agree on how to slice it.

Me, I don't take sides, even though I'm a native of Asheville, North Carolina, and a true barbecue lover





(I served it at my wedding). I just take what I think is the best of each method and make up my own.

# SLOW-COOKING IS KEY TO GOOD PORK AND A GOOD PARTY

One thing that everyone does agree on, however, is that good barbecue takes time—time to marinate and time to slowly, slowly cook to a meltingly tender texture. That's why barbecue is great for backyard parties, since most of the cooking process is just waiting. You'll have plenty of time to spend with friends or to make the fixings. I like to serve classic southern accompaniments—coleslaw, potato salad, blueberry cobbler—but all with my own contemporary twist.

#### THE MEAT THAT MAKES THE BARBECUE

At most barbecue joints, pork barbecue means cooking a whole pig on a spit, something that most people don't have the time, space, or inclination to do. Fortunately, you can make first-rate barbecue from pork shoulder, a tough cut that slowly converts to tenderness through the long cooking of a Carolina barbecue.

The shoulder contains two cuts. Pork butt (also called boneless Boston butt) comes from the front of the pig, near the neck; the picnic shoulder lies directly below the pork butt. The terms are confusing and can vary from region to region. I prefer to use pork butt because it contains more fat than the picnic shoulder.

As the pork cooks, the fat slowly melts and drips through the meat, tenderizing it and filling it with A Carolina barbecue needs more than just slow-cooked pork.
Barbecue is definitely the star of the show, but accompaniments like coleslaw, potato salad, and corn on the cob are all part and parcel of a summer party, southern style.

flavor. That's why I specify that the pork butt should *not* be trimmed at all before cooking, and why I start cooking the meat fat side up.

# A SAUCE'S INGREDIENTS REVEAL ITS ROOTS

Sauce is the source of one of the biggest disagreements in the barbeque civil war. Folks in eastern



**Three-way barbecue sauce.** The long-simmered sauce is used as a marinade, as a basting liquid, and as a dressing on the roasted pork.

North Carolina say barbecue sauce should be vinegar edged with chile heat. In western North Carolina, loyalties run toward sweeter, tomato-based sauces. And in South Carolina, where sauce is mustard based, adding tomatoes is a barbecue sacrilege.

To my mind, that bickering is unnecessary because I like all versions of the sauce. The one I make is eastern North Carolinian in origin—it's a thin, spicy sauce with lots of vinegar—but I also throw in a few tomatoes to round out the flavor.

Cooking a good sauce takes a while. The large amount of vinegar loses some of its bite during the slow cooking process, and the spices' flavors mingle and meld in the hours of gentle simmering.

The marinade and the mop—Again, opinions vary as to how barbecue sauce should be used. Some say that it should only touch the meat after it's been cooked and piled on hamburger buns. But I like to use the sauce at three stages: as a marinade, as a basting liquid (or "mop"), and finally, as a sauce.

I like to marinate the pork for at least a day; two days is even better. This gives the sauce a chance to permeate the meat with its flavor. Some cooks like to use a dry rub on pork—just the spices, with no liquid—but I think a marinade does a better job of transferring flavor.

#### COOK THE PORK S-L-O-W-L-Y

Barbecued pork depends on slow heat. If you cook pork butt too quickly, your barbecue will be tough and fatty. Slowly rendered fat is what makes the pork tender and juicy.

While pork barbecue is traditionally done over smoldering ashes, you can cook great barbecued pork in an oven, in a smoker, or on a gas or charcoal grill. For the oven, smoker, or gas grill, just heat it to 200°F. If you're cooking the pork on a wood or charcoal grill, you'll have some fire-tending to do.

**Build a gentle fire.** You want to build a slow fire, one that will let the pork cook for six hours or more. I like to start with natural charcoal, and then throw in some wood to create smoke and flavor. I love the

# Pulled pork is best

A second opinion from a cook who thinks that knives have no business near his barbecue

by John Martin Taylor

To me, there's no contest between sliced and pulled pork. Good pork barbecue, whether in eastern North Carolina, western Tennessee, or the South Carolina Lowcountry, should taste like what it is: juicy meat that's so tender it can be *pulled* from the bone.

Sinewy cuts of meat like picnic shoulder and Boston butt cook to a velvety softness over the proper heat. Why on earth would you slice it? With all the fat rendered out of the meat, it falls apart in stringy hunks that are made for pulling. Once pulled, you can chop the meat as chunky or fine as you want it.

If the perfectly barbecued and pulled pork was cooked over the smoke of a slow fire, I'll often eat it just plain, no sauce. If I do add sauce, I get a friend to sprinkle a fiery vinegar sauce on the meat as I whack away like a drummer with two cleavers. I don't make it too spicy, since I like to offer several sauces to guests. After all, seasoning is a matter of personal taste, but pulling pork is a matter of absolute truth. John Martin Taylor owns Hoppin' John's, a culinary bookstore in Charleston, South Carolina.



**To "pull" pork, use your fingers.** The tender meat will follow the grain and pull apart easily. Discard any excess fat.



**Use a knife for bite-size pieces.** Don't mince it—keep the texture chunky.

Add the sauce and toss as you go. The pork will seem to soak up the sauce, but don't overdo it.
Go easy and let your quests add more at the table.

flavor hickory adds, but it burns at a high heat, so I toss in some oak for a slower burn. If you don't have wood, charcoal alone is fine as long as it isn't too hot. You should be able to hold your hand 4 or 5 inches over the grill for at least 10 seconds before it feels too hot.

**Don't let hunger rush you** as you cook Carolina barbecue. More than anything, pork barbecue depends on time and patience for its flavor.

After the first three hours or so of cooking, I like to begin basting the pork every 30 minutes. When the pork is almost done—after six hours or so—I'll double-time and baste it every 15 minutes.

No matter how much people want to "see how it's cooking," don't open the oven, grill, or smoker unless you're basting. Lifting the lid means the slow heat escapes, and the delicious pork will take an even longer eternity to make it to the table.

After six hours, you can start testing the pork for readiness. When a meat thermometer reads between 150° and 160°F, the pork is done. Put it on a sideboard and try to let it rest for at least 20 minutes before you start chopping.

#### TURNING PORK INTO BARBECUE

The final source of the pork-barbecue controversy is the way you turn the blocks of meat into sandwich-sized portions. While I've got nothing against slicing barbecued pork, others think "pulling" the meat with a fork or fingers is the only way it should be treated, and they consider slicing heresy (see the sidebar at left).

If you choose to slice the pork, be sure you slice across the grain. The meat will seem to fall away at the touch of your knife. When the meat is sliced, gather it into a pile on a large cutting board and begin chopping with a large knife or cleaver. How much you chop is up to you; I like to aim for bite-sized pieces rather than minced meat.

After you've chopped the pork, transfer it to a large container. Begin dousing the pork with sauce and toss as you go. The juicy pork will seem to absorb all the sauce, which is exactly what it's supposed to do. I like to add just enough so there's a taste of it in

every bite, and I like to serve extra sauce at the table.

Make it ahead to make it easier. While barbecued pork is most often cooked in conjunction with picnics and other summer parties, some people say it's even more delicious when it's prepared ahead. You can cook it and re-

frigerate it whole or chopped, sauced or unsauced. To warm it up, toss the cooked, chopped, and sauced pork in a baking pan, cover with foil, and heat it at 325°F for 30 minutes.

#### **Carolina Barbecue Sauce**

This recipe produces a marinade, a "mop" (for basting the pork), and a sauce. It should have a sharp edge; if it's too sweet, add more vinegar. Yields about 12 cups.

1/3 cup honey
1/3 cup molasses

1 head garlic, broken into unpeeled cloves

2 Tbs. whole cumin seeds

3 Tbs. whole coriander seeds

1 Tbs. whole black peppercorns

8 small dried chiles

2 bay leaves

3 Tbs. tomato paste

3 cans (16 oz. each) whole peeled tomatoes, with juice

1 gt. distilled white vinegar

4 cups water

1/4 cup salt

Combine the honey, molasses, garlic, cumin, coriander, peppercorns, chiles, and bay leaves in a large stockpot over medium-low heat. Cook for 30 min., stirring occasionally. The garlic will darken, and the mixture will be very thick and fragrant. Add the tomato paste and tomatoes and cook for 15 min., stirring frequently to break up tomatoes. Stir in the vinegar, water, and salt. The sauce should be thin. Simmer the sauce, uncovered, for at least 2 hours and as long as 4 hours, stirring occasionally.

Set aside half the sauce (or more, if necessary) for marinating the pork. Let the remaining sauce cool; fish out any large pieces of garlic peel. Purée the sauce in a blender or food processor; some spices will still remain whole. The sauce should be rather watery and look similar to a brothy tomato soup.

(More recipes on the following pages)

#### ORCHESTRATING THE MEAL

The side dishes take very little time, but the barbecued pork needs a little forethought. Here's how you can divvy up the tasks.

#### 3 days ahead:

Make the barbecue sauce

#### 2 days ahead:

Marinate the pork

#### 1 day ahead:

Make the coleslaw

Roast the potatoes

## The morning of the party:

Roast the pork

Make the salad dressing

Prepare the cobbler ingredients

# Just before sitting down:

Roast the corn

Assemble the cobbler and put it in the oven





"Overnight" coleslaw is quick to make. Just toss the vegetables with the hot dressing, and give it a night in the refrigerator. The wait allows the flavors to meld and makes the cabbage crisp yet tender.

**Don't husk this corn on the cob**. The husks let you cook the corn directly on a hot grill.

#### Carolina Barbecued Pork

I like to marinate the meat for at least a day; two is even better. You can roast the pork in the oven or on the grill. *Yields 2½ pounds of barbecue; serves eight to ten.* 

1 recipe Carolina Barbecue Sauce (see p. 39), cooled 2 boneless fresh pork butts (3 lb. each), untrimmed White hamburger buns for serving

One to two days before the barbecue—Put the pork in a container just large enough to hold it and deep enough for the sauce to cover the meat. Pour in enough sauce to cover the meat, cover the container, and refrigerate for at least a day, preferably two. Reserve the rest of the sauce for basting and dressing the meat. Halfway through the marinating process, turn the pork in the sauce.

Barbecue the pork—If you're using a charcoal grill, start a slow fire; you should be able to hold your hand just a few inches above the grate for 10 seconds without becoming uncomfortably hot. If you're using a gas grill, oven, or smoker, heat it to 200°F.

Put the marinated pork butts fat side up on the grill or smoker and close the lid. (For the oven, put the pork on a rack in a roasting pan.) Leave the pork alone for about 3 hours, then begin basting with sauce every 30 min. Four hours into cooking, turn the pork over and continue cooking for another 2 hours. The pork is ready when the internal temperature reads between 150° and 160°F. This should take about 2 hours per pound. Take the pork off the heat and let it sit until cool enough to handle.

Chop and shred the pork—You can slice the pork or pull it apart with your fingers. For slicing, cut the pork across the grain in ½-inch slices. For pulling, start pulling at the meat with a fork, then attack it with your fingers; the pork will come apart in large chunks. Pick out any unrendered fat.

With a large, heavy knife, roughly chop the pork coarse. Put the chopped pork in a large bowl and begin tossing in some of the reserved sauce; the amount is a matter of taste. Serve the pork warm with more sauce on the side.

#### **Roasted Corn**

This corn can be roasted on the grill or in the oven. Don't tear off the husks; just pull them back enough so you can tear off the silks.

Fresh corn, 1 ear per person Olive oil Salt and freshly ground black pepper

For backyard roasting—Pull back (but don't tear off) the husks and remove the silk. Rub each ear of corn with a little olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Rewrap the corn in their husks and soak in cold water for 10 min.

Put the corn on a hot grill, turning occasionally until the husks are brown.

For indoor roasting—Remove the husks and silk, rub with olive oil, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Put the corn directly on the middle shelf of a 400°F oven and roast for 15 min., turning occasionally.

#### Overnight Coleslaw with Mustard Seed

The cabbage releases water as it sits; I recommend making the coleslaw the day before you plan to serve it. *Yields 11 cups*.

1 head green cabbage, cored and sliced thin 2 carrots, peeled and grated 1 medium white onion, diced 1 cup white-wine vinegar 3/4 cup canola oil 1/2 cup honey 1 Tbs. lemon juice 2 Tbs. mustard seeds 1 Tbs. salt 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

In a large, nonreactive mixing bowl, combine the cabbage, carrots, and onion.

Make the dressing—In a nonreactive saucepan over medium heat, mix the vinegar, oil, honey, lemon juice, mustard seeds, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil, stirring often. Take the dressing off the heat; immediately pour it over the vegetables. Toss well, cover, and refrigerate for at least 6 hours (overnight is best) before serving.

# Roasted New Potato Salad with Dijon & Rosemary

You can roast the potatoes and make the mayonnaise a day ahead; combine them just before serving. *Yields* 12 cups.

4 lb. new red potatoes 1 cup canola oil 2 Tbs. chopped fresh rosemary leaves 1½ tsp. salt 1 Tbs. lemon juice



**Dress the salad just before dinner.** You can roast the potatoes the night before.

2 tsp. Dijon mustard 2 egg yolks 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper ½ cup chopped scallions (mostly white, with 1 to 2 inches

Heat the oven to 400°F. Scrub the potatoes, but leave on the skins. Toss with 2 Tbs. of the canola oil, 1 Tbs. rosemary, and 1 tsp. salt. Roast the potatoes in a large roasting pan until tender, 25 to 45 min., depending on size. Remove from the oven and cool to room temperature.

Make the rosemary mayonnaise—Whisk together the lemon juice, mustard, and egg yolks. Slowly whisk in the remaining oil. When the oil is incorporated and the dressing is smooth, whisk in the remaining 1 Tbs. rosemary,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt, and the pepper.

Quarter the potatoes and put them in a large bowl. Add the mayonnaise and toss to coat. Add the scallions and toss once more. Serve at room temperature.

#### Cinnamon-Cornbread Cobbler with Blueberries

I love the way corn and blueberries taste together. This takes just minutes to make and is great with vanilla ice cream. Serves twelve.

8 cups blueberries, rinsed 1/3 to 1/2 cup sugar, depending on the sweetness of the fruit 2 Tbs. lemon juice



#### FOR THE CORNBREAD TOPPING: 1 cup cornmeal 3/4 cup all-purpose flour ½ cup sugar 21/2 tsp. baking powder ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon 1/4 tsp. salt 3/4 cup buttermilk 6 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted and cooled 1 egg, lightly beaten

Heat the oven to 375°F. Toss the blueberries with the sugar and lemon juice. Pour into a 9x13-inch pan.

Make the topping—Combine the cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt in a mixing bowl. Make a well in the center and pour in the buttermilk, melted butter, and beaten egg. Stir with a wooden spoon to blend and then mix with a fork only until the batter comes together.

Drop the batter by spoonfuls on top of the blueberries in the pan. Bake the cobbler for 40 to 45 min., or until the filling is bubbly and the topping is firm when pressed.

Scott Howell is the chef/owner of Nana's and Pop's in Durham, North Carolina.

#### This simple cobbler tastes like summer. Dollops of cinnamonflavored cornbread top fresh blueberries that have been tossed with just a little sugar and lemon juice.



# Drink Choices

#### Fruit beer is an appealing partner for pork

spice of this Carolina barbecue, why not try something new? A "red" beer like Killian's (its deep copper color comes from extra malt roasting) will satisfy purists who want traditional beer flavor. Or you could try Kingsbury, a nonalcoholic red brew.

With the sweetness and

For the adventurous, there's a rainbow of fruit-enhanced beers new to this country, and fruit flavors are a natural with pork. These are serious beers with a difference: there's real fruit brewed right in. The Belgians have long known them as lambic beers.

Portland Brewing's Wheat Berry Brew balances Oregon marionberries with more pronounced grain character. And the coffee-colored Blackberry Brew, a rich, dense porter from Oregon Ale & Beer Company, shows only a hint of berry on the nose and on the long, malty finish.

For lighter body, I'd choose Georgia Peach Wheat Beer from Atlanta. Or if you want to get really exotic, Juju Ginger, from Left Hand Brewing Co. in Colorado, adds a zingy touch of spice. -Rosina Tinari Wilson, a food and wine writer and teacher, is a contributing editor for Fine Cooking.

# hotos: Boyd Hagen

# Summer Vegetables Make a Swift Sauté

A flash of high heat and a splash of flavor turn vegetables into inspired side dishes or main courses





**Sautéed vegetables should shake, hop, and jump.** Keep the vegetables moving in the pan to prevent them from scorching.

s a cook, I find summer a frustrating time. All those wonderful peak-of-the-season vegetables beckon me to the kitchen, but the warm weather calls me to the lake. Luckily, I've discovered that a pan of quickly sautéed vegetables can be the starting point for all kinds of easy meals. A splash of vinegar, some fresh herbs, and a handful of toasted nuts make plain sautéed vegetables taste like something special. With a little liquid, sautéed vegetables become a pasta sauce. Or I can toss what's left of last night's chicken in the pan, steam some rice, and dinner for four is on the table in less than half an hour. To me, sautéed vegetables mean meals that are as spontaneous as last-minute summer plans.

#### **SAUTEING BASICS**

To prepare great sautéed vegetables, you need to know the basics: choose vegetables that don't take long to cook, cut them in shapes that allow them to cook quickly, and add them to the pan in the order of the cooking time they need. But seasonings are what make sautéed

vegetables fun, and you can add them every step of the way.

Choose vegetables that offer the most flavor. Since sautéing means cooking quickly, the best vegetables to use are those that don't need much heat to taste good. Vegetables you wouldn't consider eating right out of the ground usually need

The trick is to make the vegetables dance over the heat.

the longer cooking times of roasting, steaming, or stewing. While there are exceptions—sautéed eggplant and potatoes are delicious—they need more oil and more cooking time than I want to give to a quick summer meal.

#### SMALL SLICES = QUICK COOKING

Vegetables for sautéing should be sliced into bite-sized pieces, anywhere from a

1/4-inch dice to 2-inch sticks. If you're slicing a vegetable into rounds, they shouldn't be more than 1/4 inch thick. The best size and shape depends on the vegetable you're using.

Big pieces don't sauté well. Firm vegetables (carrots, broccoli) take a long time to cook if cut in 1-inch rounds. Softer vegetables (summer squash) just get soggy if they aren't cut small enough. Very soft vegetables like mushrooms are an exception; they contain so much water that they become soggy if cut too small.

If sliced into 1- or 2-inch sections, asparagus and green beans take 7 to 10 minutes to cook. Scallions cut in the same shape need only 2 or 3 minutes.

Very small cooks very fast. If you dice carrots very small, they'll cook in just 4 or 5 minutes. Cut in the same shape, zucchini needs only 2 or 3 minutes.

#### A LIGHT SAUTE NEEDS A HEAVY PAN

A large, heavy skillet is the most important tool for sautéing vegetables well.

**Give vegetables their space.** The pan should be big enough for the vegetables



to spread out. This ensures that they'll be thoroughly coated with oil and that they'll make immediate, even contact with the heat. If they're scrunched together, the vegetables will steam, not sauté.

Your pan should also have a heavy base, which will conduct heat evenly and have fewer of the hot spots that can cause food to scorch. If you want good results with less oil, try using a professional-quality nonstick pan, but don't skip the oil altogether: the vegetables need a little to cook quickly and bring out their flavor.

#### THE VEGETABLE PECKING ORDER

If you're sautéing several kinds of vegetables together, slice them all about the same size. While this makes an attractive dish, it also makes it easier to judge which vegetable should go in the pan when. Generally, the firmest vegetables should hit the fire first. This guideline is flexible, however; for example, finely cut broccoli stems will probably cook faster than 2-inch green bean sections.

The better a vegetable tastes raw, the less time it needs in the skillet. Bell peppers, sugar snap peas, corn, and baby carrots are delicious just rinsed and trimmed, so I cook them for only a minute or two. Green beans, carrots, and asparagus need a little more time. Tomatoes, cucumbers, and other vegetables that contain a lot of water should only be in the pan for a moment; otherwise, their liquid could steam the other vegetables.

# WHOLESOME VEGETABLES LOVE SEASONINGS, EXOTIC OR HUMBLE

When you sauté vegetables, you can add

flavor with the oil you choose, the aromatics you add before the vegetables, and the seasonings you add at the end.

Choose oil by taste. While you don't need much oil or butter to sauté vegetables, a little is a must. The thin sheen of hot fat not only seals in flavor, but the fat can also be a flavor element in itself.

The distinct taste of olive oil or butter adds to the character of a dish. So do nut and seed oils (such as walnut and sesame) and spice- or herb-infused oils. If you choose one of these more delicate fats, you'll have to watch the heat—they can scorch. Try combining them with vegetable oil, which tastes neutral but won't burn as easily.

Aromatics add more than aroma. Heat brings out the flavor in aromatics such as garlic, onions, and ginger, and

they're the first thing you should add to the hot butter or oil.

Final additions, large and small. You can change the entire character of sautéed vegetables with last-minute additions. Cream and chicken stock turn sautéed vegetables into a pasta sauce; some tofu or leftover steak transform a side dish into a meal. I also like to shower sautéed vegetables with lots of flavorings at the last second. Adding delicate flavorings, such as herbs or grated citrus zest, at the end of cooking time means that the high heat can't dampen their spirit.

#### STEPS FOR SAUTEING

Sautéing vegetables is a blissfully brief process, but that swiftness means you need to have all your ingredients sliced, diced, and ready to go. Sautéing requires all your concentration as soon as the first ingredients hit the pan.

The aromatics first. Heat the oil in the skillet over high heat. When the oil is very hot (you'll be able to smell it, and little ripples will begin to appear), add ingredients such as garlic, onions, or ginger. Give these a quick stir to bring out their flavors. As soon as they release their fragrance, you're ready to add the vegetables.

Now the vegetables. Add the vegetables according to their cooking time. As they cook, they'll soften a little and caramelize slightly. Toward the end of the cooking time, you may need to cover the vegetables for a minute or two to steam briefly and ensure they're cooked through.



Enrich sautéed vegetables with chicken stock and cream. Just omit the vinegar to prevent curdling.

Keep 'em moving. Making the vegetables dance over the heat helps the liquid evaporate and prevents the vegetables from burning. I shake the pan to make the vegetables hop and flip: I push the pan away from me, which makes the vegetables jump in the air, and then I quickly pull the pan back toward me to catch them. A wide, flat spatula or a big spoon is helpful for lifting and flipping vegetables.

Finish with flavor. About a minute before I take the vegetables off the heat, I like to add an acidic ingredient—a splash of vinegar, citrus juice, or wine for flavor. This also produces a final blast of steam that finishes the cooking process. Use a



**Dinner's ready in the time it takes to boil water**. Toss the vegetables in a cream sauce with pasta.

light hand: too much liquid turns a sauté soggy. The finished dish should be bright, crisp, glossy, and just tender.

# Mushrooms, Asparagus & Sunchokes with Hazelnuts

Sunchokes, also called Jerusalem artichokes, have a nutty flavor and crunchy texture that's a delicious contrast to the sweet asparagus and mushrooms. If you can't find sunchokes, use extra asparagus and mushrooms. Serves four.

1/3 cup hazelnuts 1/4 cup walnut oil 2/3 lb. sunchokes, peeled and sliced into 1-inch sticks

# Sautéing vegetables, at a glance

From these elements, you can create dozens of sautéed vegetable combinations. Use this chart for inspiration every step of the way.

#### To a hot pan, add-

- ♦ Olive oil
- ◆ Peanut oil
- ♦ Vegetable oil
- Unsalted butter
- ◆ Sesame oil (light or dark)
- ♦ Walnut oil
- ♦ Hazelnut oil

#### Followed by-

- ◆ Garlic
- ◆ Ginger
- ◆Onion

# Slow-cooking vegetables go in first—

(Cut into 1-inch pieces, for 5 to 6 minutes total sauté time.)

- ◆ Asparagus
- **◆** Carrots
- ◆ Fennel
- ◆ Green beans
- ♦ Mushrooms
- ♦ Wax beans

## Quick-cooking vegetables are next—

(Cut into 1-inch pieces, for 2 to 3 minutes sauté time.)

- ◆ Bell peppers
- ◆Celery
- **♦**Corn
- ◆ Cucumbers
- ◆ Greens (spinach, collards, kale)
- ◆ Peas
- **◆ Scallions**
- ◆ Sugar snap peas
- ◆ Tomatoes

## At the end, add—

- ◆ Balsamic vinegar
- Chopped fresh herbs
- ◆ Citrus zest and juice
- Flavored herb and fruit vinegars
- ◆ Rice-wine vinegar
- ◆ Sherry vinegar
- **♦**Wine

# Just before serving, toss in a little—

- ◆Grated cheese
- ◆ Salt and freshly ground pepper
- ◆ Toasted breadcrumbs
- ◆ Toasted nuts or sesame seeds





Pine nuts update the classic "green-bean amandine." The green and wax beans are quickly sautéed in brown butter, and they get a quick spurt of lemon juice before serving.

<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> lb. asparagus (about 14 medium stalks), rinsed, tough stems snapped off, and cut into 1-inch lengths

1 cup quartered wild mushrooms (about 8 medium), or a mix of wild and domestic 1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme (or  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. dried) 1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar; more or less to taste

Heat the oven to 400°F. Spread the nuts on a small baking sheet and toast for 6 to 8 min., or until their skins turn dark and crack. Pour the nuts into a clean dishtowel, fold the towel in half, let the nuts cool slightly, and rub the towel against them to remove their skins. Chop the nuts coarse and set aside.

In a large skillet, heat the walnut oil over medium-high heat. Add the sunchokes, asparagus, and mushrooms. Sauté, stirring often, for 1 to 2 min. Sprinkle the vegetables with the thyme, salt, pepper, and vinegar. Reduce the heat slightly, cover the pan, and continue cooking for 1 to 2 min., shaking or stirring occasionally until the vegetables are crisp-tender. At the last moment, toss in the chopped hazelnuts. Serve immediately.

#### **VARIATION WITH PASTA & CREAM**

A few extra ingredients turn this sauté into a main course. Serves four.

8 oz. radiatore or other spiral-shaped pasta 1 recipe Mushrooms, Asparagus & Sunchokes with Hazelnuts (balsamic vinegar omitted) 1/2 cup chicken stock 1/2 cup dry white wine

1/3 cup heavy cream

1/8 tsp. grated nutmeg

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste 2 oz. prosciutto or ham, sliced thin and cut into 1/2-inch strips

Cook the pasta in salted boiling water as you prepare the Mushrooms, Asparagus &

Sunchokes with Hazelnuts, omitting the balsamic vinegar. Add the stock, wine, and cream to the sautéed vegetables. Bring the liquid to a boil over high heat and let it reduce for about 5 min. to marry and intensify the flavors. Season with nutmeg, salt, and pepper: toss the sauce with the pasta and prosciutto. Garnish with the chopped hazelnuts and serve.

#### **Green & Wax Beans** with Brown Butter

The distinctly nutty taste of the brown butter is enhanced by toasted pine nuts. Serves four.

1/4 cup pine nuts 2 Tbs. unsalted butter 1/2 lb. green beans, ends snapped, cut into 2-inch lengths 1/2 lb. wax beans, ends snapped, cut into 2-inch lengths 1 small shallot, diced fine 2 Tbs. lemon juice 1 tsp. grated lemon zest 2 tsp. chopped fresh thyme (or 1 tsp. dried) Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a small, dry skillet, toast the pine nuts over medium heat, shaking the pan occasionally, until the nuts are fragrant and lightly browned, about 5 min. Set aside.

In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium heat until it begins to brown and smell nutty. Be careful: if the butter cooks too long, it will burn; if it isn't cooked long enough, it will lack the deep flavor it needs. Add the beans and shallot, tossing to coat, and cook for 2 to 3 min. Add the lemon juice, cover the pan, and cook for 4 to 6 min. Do not overcook. Remove the pan from the heat. Toss in the grated lemon

zest and thyme. Season with salt and pepper to taste, sprinkle with the toasted pine nuts, and serve.

#### **Gingered Zucchini & Carrots**

This simple, colorful side dish easily doubles as a light entrée when you add sautéed chicken or tofu and serve it over noodles. Flavored vinegars are also good here. Serves four.

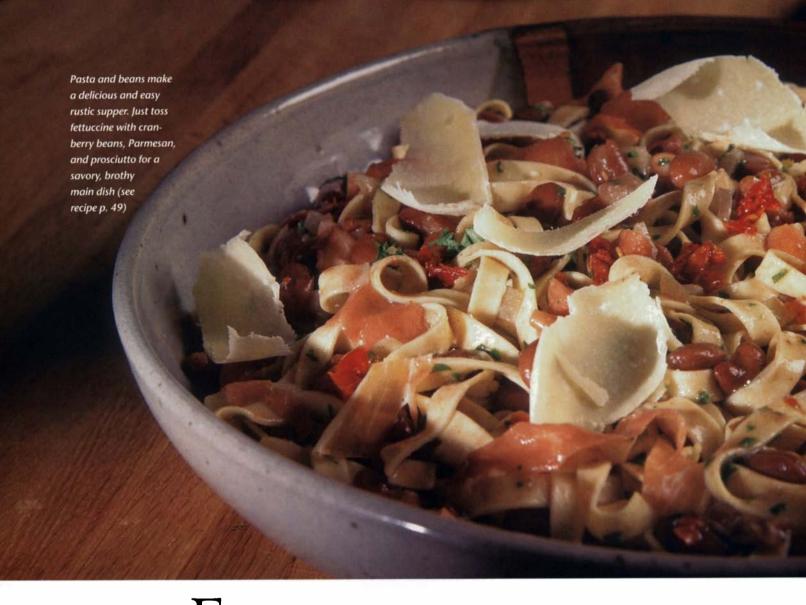
 $1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. sesame seeds 1 tsp. dark sesame oil 1 Tbs. canola oil 1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh ainaer 2 cloves garlic, minced 2 carrots, cut into 2-inch sticks 1 medium zucchini (about 6 oz.), cut into 1/2-inch sticks 1 Tbs. red-wine vinegar 2 tsp. chopped fresh mint; more to taste 2 tsp. chopped fresh basil; more to taste

In a small, dry skillet, toast the sesame seeds over medium heat, shaking the pan occasionally, until the seeds are fragrant and lightly browned, about 5 min. Set aside.

In a large skillet, heat the sesame oil and canola oil over medium heat. Add the ginger and garlic and give them a quick stir. Toss in the carrots and sauté for 5 min. Add the zucchini and continue cooking until tender, 3 to 5 min. Remove the pan from the heat and toss in the vinegar, mint, and basil. Sprinkle with the sesame seeds and serve.

Beth Dooley is a food writer in Minneapolis. Lucia Watson, chef at Lucia's in Minneapolis, also contributed to this article. Together, they wrote Savoring the Seasons of the Northern Heartland (Knopf, 1995). ◆

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Pasta and beans come in lots of sizes and shapes, but flavor differences are minimal. Choose combinations that look appealing.

> Tubettini pasta

Yellow-eyed beans

avorite comfort foods are a personal matter. I have friends who say that mashed potatoes or macaroni and cheese have restorative powers, but for me it's pasta e fagioli, or pasta and bean soup. My mom made it rich and brothy, kissed with garlic, and cloaked in top-quality Parmesan.

Since my love for pasta and beans was imprinted in childhood, the grown-up news that the pair is an inexpensive source of high-quality nutrition is just a bonus. Being frugal and healthy has its place, but I love pasta and beans for what they offer my palate.

#### SOUP, SALAD, OR FEAST

Pasta and bean dishes are easy to make—cook the pasta, cook the beans (or open a can), add some sea-

sonings, and you've got a great



meal. Pasta and beans can mean my mom's soup, a refreshing bean-and-pasta salad, or a relatively sophisticated supper of beans braised in chicken stock, tossed with fresh noodles, prosciutto, and Parmesan. With proper cooking and inspired seasoning, subtle becomes sensational.

# HUMBLE INGREDIENTS MAKE LIVELY COMBINATIONS

Pasta and beans are a blank canvas for flavor. They both taste neutral by nature, which means they also team well with almost any seasoning, especially assertive flavors. These can take the form of a pungent olive paste, a little high-quality prosciutto, or a sprinkling of red pepper flakes. Also, pasta and beans love to soak up a





beans



# The Delicious Pairing of Pasta and Beans

With a touch of garlic or a shower of herbs, this wholesome fare offers savory satisfaction

BY ROSINA TINARI WILSON

good vinaigrette, and its acidity really wakes up the flavors and cuts through the starchiness of the beans.

While this may speak of my Italian ancestry, garlic and olive oil appear in almost all of my favorite pasta and bean dishes. Garlic is never harsh with pasta and beans; instead, the intense flavor spreads itself thin, permeating the bland ingredients with a depth of flavor they'd otherwise lack. Just a little good-quality olive oil adds lushness and enhances the other seasonings in the dish.

The way to use herbs with pasta and beans depends on the herbs you use. All dried

herbs and some fresh ones (rosemary, bay leaves, thyme) should be added to the beans during cooking; they need time, heat, and moisture to release their

> Swedish brown beans



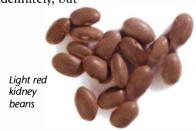
flavors. "Soft" herbs (fresh parsley, basil, dill, cilantro) should be added at the last moment; this lets their delicate textures and bright flavors stand out.

# THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE PASTA AND BEANS: EASILY

One of the most appealing features of pasta and bean dishes is their easy preparation. There's no trick to cooking pasta, and cooking dried beans is a little more complex, but not by much.

Whether or not my method for cooking beans is the "best" way, it works for me without fail and requires very little attention for success.

**Start with "fresh" dried beans.** Dried beans keep almost indefinitely, but





Egg

noodles

they become tender more reliably if they're less than a year old. Rinse the beans in a colander to remove dust and to give you a chance to pick out any small stones lurking among them.

Give beans a soak and then put them in the oven. Put the beans in a saucepan and add enough water to cover. Bring it to a boil, remove the pan from the heat, cover, and let the beans soak for an hour. Then drain the beans, transfer them to an ovenproof casserole, add enough hot water or stock to cover, and bake in a 350°F oven until tender, about 1½ to 3 hours. This hands-off technique produces perfectly tender beans, without burning or mushiness.

**Don't salt the water.** Beans need salt, but not at the start: salt toughens their skins. Add salt halfway through cooking. Don't wait until after cooking to salt; at that point, salt won't penetrate the beans.

Cook beans of similar sizes in the same pot. If you want to cook a soup with more than one kind of bean, use beans of a similar size so they'll cook in the same amount of time. Also, while some bean varieties have beautiful colors and patterns when they're raw, expect them to muddy in cooking.



Rinse beans before cooking. Water removes residue and lets you spot debris.



**Beans need salt**—at the right time. Too soon, and the beans get tough. Add the salt halfway through cooking.

To rinse or not to rinse? The soaking liquid contains some of the substance in beans that causes intestinal discomfort, so I rinse beans after soaking, but not after cooking. Rinsing cooked beans means you're losing color, flavor, and thickening power.

Canned beans are fine. While I prefer the variety and freshness that comes from cooking my own beans, canned beans are quite tasty and can't be beat for convenience when making a soup or a stew. I don't rinse canned beans; their liquid is little more than salted water and beans, and I think rinsing lessens the flavor. You should, however, drain and rinse canned beans for salads or to limit your sodium intake.

**Don't overcook the pasta**. Always cook pasta in a generous amount of salted water that's been heated to a rolling boil. If the pasta will be cooked further after it's added to the beans, undercook it a bit. The pasta should still be resilient when you bite into it.

Since pasta and beans readily absorb other flavors, these dishes are especially good the next day. If you freeze leftovers, be aware that they'll be a bit mushy after defrosting.

#### Spicy Pasta e Fagioli

This is the soup I couldn't live without. With a green salad, it's a meal. *Yields 9 cups; serves four.* 

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 to 1½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
 ½ tsp. dried red pepper flakes
 ½ cup finely chopped onion
 One 2-oz. can anchovies, drained and chopped fine or mashed



Pasta and beans turn a salad into a light summer supper.

This Tuscan bean salad combines cannellini beans with pasta and a rosemary vinaigrette. Top it with imported Italian tuna. In the summer, it's also great with a toss of tomatoes and basil.

Two 15-oz. cans Great Northern or other white beans, with their liquid

1/4 lb disalini or other small pasta (about 1 cup dry) or

¼ Ib. ditalini or other small pasta (about 1 cup dry), cooked 3 cups vegetable stock, chicken stock, or water

1 Tbs. lemon juice

1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley leaves

½ cup (about 2 oz.) grated Parmesan

Salt to taste

In a large pot, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Sauté the garlic, black pepper, and red pepper flakes for 30 seconds. Add the onion and anchovies and sauté until the onion is soft and translucent, about 2 min.

Add the beans with their liquid, the *ditalini*, and the stock. Let the mixture come to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer for 5 to 10 min. Just before serving, stir in the lemon juice, parsley, and ½ cup Parmesan. Add salt to taste. Serve hot, passing the remaining Parmesan at the table.

#### **Tuscan White Bean Salad**

The recipe calls for the salad to be chilled briefly to give the flavors a chance to meld. *Yields 5 cups; serves four.* 

1/4 lb. tubettini or other small pasta (about 1 cup dry), cooked One 15-oz. can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained 4 anchovy fillets, drained and chopped fine or mashed (optional)

1/2 cup finely chopped red onion
1 clove garlic, minced
2 tsp. minced fresh rosemary
1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh parsley leaves

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling

1 Tbs. lemon juice Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste 1 can oil-packed tuna, preferably Italian (optional)

Fold the *tubettini* and beans together in a large bowl; set aside. In a small bowl, whisk together the anchovies, onion, garlic, rosemary, parsley, olive oil, and lemon juice.

Toss the pasta and beans with the dressing. Add salt and pepper and chill for at least 15 min. Just before serving, top the salad with flaked tuna, if you like, and drizzle with olive oil. Serve at cool room temperature.

#### **Bolognese Borlotti Beans**

The dappled-pink cranberry beans (also called *borlotti* or Roman beans) in this dish are native to Italy. If you can't find them, use pinto beans. *Yields 6 cups; serves four.* 

1 cup dried cranberry or pinto beans 2 to 4 cups chicken or vegetable stock, homemade or low-salt canned 1 tsp. salt; more to taste 2 Tbs. olive oil

1/2 medium onion, chopped coarse 2 cloves garlic, minced

12 oz. fresh fettuccine, cut diagonally into 2-inch lengths ½ cup coarsely chopped sun-dried

tomatoes (drained if packed in oil)

2 oz. prosciutto, sliced thin and cut into 1/2-inch strips

½ cup coarsely chopped fresh parsley leaves ¼ cup grated Parmesan Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste Small block of Parmesan for shaving (optional)



Cook the beans—Rinse the beans, pick them over well, and put them in a large saucepan with just enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, remove from the heat, cover, and allow to sit for 1 hour. Add more water if necessary to cover the beans.

Heat the oven to 350°F. Drain the beans and put them in an ovenproof casserole. Add enough stock to cover them, cover the casserole with a lid or foil, and bake the beans until tender, 2 to 2½ hours. After 1 hour, add 1 tsp. salt and check the stock level. The beans should still be covered by stock; add more if necessary. When the beans are tender, strain off the liquid and measure it; add enough stock to make 2 cups. Recombine the liquid and beans and set aside.

Heat the olive oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Sauté the onion until soft and translucent, 5 to 7 min. Stir in the garlic and sauté 2 to 3 min. Add the beans and their liquid to the sautéed onion and garlic. Simmer 5 to 10 min. to combine the flavors; remove from the heat.

Meanwhile, cook the pasta until tender, drain it, and add it immediately to the beans. Stir in the tomatoes and prosciutto, reserving some of each for garnish. Toss with the parsley and grated Parmesan. Add salt and pepper.

Arrange the pasta and beans in a serving bowl. Top with the reserved tomatoes and prosciutto. With a sharp knife or vegetable peeler, shave thin curls from the block of Parmesan and scatter them on top. Serve immediately.

Rosina Tinari Wilson is a food consultant, teacher, and writer in Kensington, California. The author of Seafood, Pasta & Noodles (Ten Speed Press, 1995), she is a contributing editor for Fine Cooking.

Pasta and beans are the soul of pasta e fagioli. The classic Italian soup is based on humble ingredients, but the rich flavors of Parmesan, anchovies, and olive oil make it memorable comfort food.

# Steaming Seafood for Clear, Pure Flavors

Whether it's clams, snapper, or salmon, seafood responds deliciously to quick, moist cooking over an aromatic broth

BY ALISON BARSHAK

s a kid, I thought steamed seafood was one of the best things in life. At our favorite restaurant, my family ate at newspaper-covered tables on which the waitress unceremoniously dumped huge platters of steamed crabs—the only item on the menu. We ate dozens of crabs, savoring the sweet flavor of just-caught seafood unmasked by heavy sauces.

Today, I'm the chef at a restaurant where white linen tablecloths take the place of newspaper and a full range of fresh, sweet seafood is the star of my menu. I've learned many ways to prepare seafood, but I still think steam has an unmatched capacity for bringing out the pure ocean flavor of fish and shellfish.

Steaming is a quick and easy way to produce a delicious meal in very little time. Whether you're cooking salmon in the steam of a herb-infused broth or steaming clams in white wine, you won't need to spend much time preparing the flavoring ingredients or cooking the fish. You don't even need to buy a steamer—it's easy to make one with standard kitchen equipment. The most difficult part of steaming

seafood is making sure what you're steaming is very fresh. Tired seafood has no place to hide in simple dishes; what you'll taste is what you bought.

#### IT'S JUST SEAFOOD PLUS STEAM PLUS FLAVOR

At its most basic, steaming means putting food over very hot water that produces rising steam, which in turn cooks the food. While this method is elegant in its simplicity, I like to improve upon it by adding flavor.

Wrapping fish with flavor. When you scatter herbs directly on fish and enfold it in plastic or parchment, all the herbal flavor is captured in the wrapping, so it really penetrates the fish during steaming. For a dramatic table presentation, you can wrap the fish in banana leaves or cabbage leaves.

This method is especially good for steaming lean fish, such as halibut and flounder; the wrapping not

A one-pot dish becomes a one-bowl meal. The salmon and couscous are steamed together over the broth. At serving time, the fish is arranged on a bed of couscous, and the broth is poured over all.







Wrap up all the flavor and seal it in with steam. A spoonful of aromatic ingredients permeates the mild fish during cooking.

only traps flavor but protects the fish's delicate flesh as well. It's also great when you want to prepare a meal in advance. You can wrap the fish and keep it in the refrigerator until you're ready to steam it.

**Steaming over broth.** Steaming fish over herbinfused broths is a method that seems almost too good to be true. Combine vegetables and seasonings with water, bring it to a boil, and steam fish fillets over the water. Ten minutes later, you have a fillet that has absorbed the flavors of the broth, and a flavorful broth to serve with the fish. Both components of the dish are delicious, and they practically cooked themselves.

Fattier fish like salmon are good for this technique; the flavor of the fish's fat adds to the broth, but the fish retains enough fat to keep it tasty. The broth can be flavored with almost anything: lemongrass, fresh herbs, garlic, ginger, or diced aromatic vegetables. Onions and carrots are among my favorites.

White wine also makes a delicious broth for steaming. I can never get enough of clams steamed with white wine, garlic, and lemon, especially when I swirl in a little butter at the end.

#### SIMPLE TECHNIQUE, SIMPLE EQUIPMENT

Any pot or deep saucepan with a tight-fitting lid can become a steamer; just set a few inverted empty cans



**Bright citrus zest accents with flavor and color.** A simple topping of orange, garlic, and ginger is a fresh partner for halibut.

or molds and a cake rack or plate inside the pan to raise the fish above the cooking liquid. Electric steamers and fish poachers also work well, but my favorite tool is probably the bamboo steamer.

Bamboo steamers consist of two or three bamboo trays that sit over a wok or saucepan. The steaming liquid goes in the wok or pan, the trays go on top and are capped by a bamboo lid to keep in the steam. The bamboo steamer's stacking style lets you cook a lot of food in relatively little space. Don't stack the steamers more than three high, however, since steam loses its power as it rises.

If you don't have one, bamboo steamers are easy to find and buy (they're very inexpensive). They're also easy to clean, and they look good on the table.

#### CHOOSE FRESH FISH OR DON'T STEAM IT

The most important step in steaming fish is choosing good-quality seafood in the first place. In steamed fish, the focus is on the fish's own flavor, which makes it difficult to compensate for mediocre seafood.

All seafood should have a sweet ocean smell. Seafood should never smell fishy, but an absence of odor is as bad as a strong odor; this can mean the fish was washed with chemicals to remove odor.

Here's a rundown of some of my favorite candidates for seafood steaming:

Best shellfish: mussels, clams, crabs, lobsters, shrimp, and scallops. When steaming live shell-fish, choose ones that are very active. Clams and mussels should be tightly closed; if open, they should shut quickly when touched. Crabs and lobsters should be lively.

If you're steaming scallops, use sea scallops; their large size makes for a better texture than bay scallops. If by some wonderful circumstance, however, you find Taylor Bay scallops (they're farm-raised and are



sold still in the shell), use them. Treat them like clams and mussels, and invite someone you love to dine with you; their flavor is extraordinary.

Shrimp steams very well. If you want to chill the shrimp before serving, steam them in their shells. Otherwise, peel and devein the shrimp before steaming. Ironically, frozen shrimp is often better than "fresh"; almost no shrimp sold commercially is truly fresh because most of it is flash-frozen on the boat the moment it's caught. That's why it may be better to buy still-frozen shrimp and defrost it at home. Avoid shrimp with dried white edges and splotches; it's been freezer burned.

Best fillets: salmon, cod, sole, halibut, flounder, grouper, catfish, perch,

bluefish, and mackerel. Pick fillets or steaks that are firm and shiny with good color. The meat should not look dried out or opaque. Remove the skin from fillets, since the texture of steamed skin isn't appealing.

If you can buy very fresh whole fish, take advantage of it with steaming—sea bass, perch, and trout are especially good. Ask your fishmonger to gut and gill the fish for you. I like to bring the fish to the table whole and let guests pick around the skin and bones.

#### IS IT DONE?

Clams and mussels open their shells when done, but judging doneness in other types of seaf ood is a matter of guidelines, not obvious tests. The greatest mistake is overcooking, which leaves fish flaky and dry. Don't fear undercooking; you can always cook it more. I think most fish tastes best when cooked medium rare: moist and still slightly translucent in the center.

To test for doneness in whole fish, use a knife to poke the flesh in the center behind the gills. Pull the meat aside to see if it's still raw near the bones. If blood is still coming from flesh, cook a little longer.

To test for doneness in fillets, use your sense of touch and sight. The fish should feel firm, not hard or rubbery, and the flesh should just begin to yield to pressure. To be sure, slide a knife into the fillet and separate the flakes to look for rawness.

#### Halibut with Scallions & Sesame Oil

This dish goes together in less than 20 minutes. If you can't get halibut, any firm-fleshed white fish will do. *Serves four.* 

2 Tbs. minced fresh ginger
1 small clove garlic, minced
2 Tbs. thinly sliced scallions
2 Tbs. toasted sesame oil
2 tsp. minced orange zest
4 halibut fillets (about 4 oz. each), skin removed
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

In a small bowl, combine the ginger, garlic, scallions, sesame oil, and orange zest. Divide the mixture and pat evenly on the fish fillets. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Lay a fillet in the center of an 8-inch sheet of plastic. Fold the plastic to create a tight package. Repeat with the other fillets.

Steam the fillets over simmering water for about 12 to 14 min., depending on the thickness of the fillets. Unwrap the fillets and transfer to a serving plate, pouring any steaming juices from the plastic over the fish.

#### Steamed Grouper with Sun-Dried Tomato Pesto

This recipe makes a little more pesto than you'll need, but it keeps well and has many uses. Other pestos or other firm, white fish can be substituted. Serves four.

1/3 cup chopped rehydrated or oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained

1 large clove garlic, minced

 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (packed) basil leaves, picked, washed, and dried

1/3 cup (packed) flat-leaf parsley leaves

2 Tbs. grated Parmesan

3 Tbs. pine nuts, toasted

1/4 cup olive oil

1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

1/2 tsp. salt

4 grouper fillets (about 6 oz. each)

For the pesto—In a blender, combine the tomatoes, garlic, basil, parsley, Parmesan, pine nuts, olive oil, and pepper until the mixture becomes a rough purée.

Lay a fillet in the center of an 8-inch sheet of plastic wrap. Evenly spread about 1 Tbs. of the pesto on the fillet and fold the plastic over the fish to create a tight package. Repeat with the other fillets.

Steam the fillets over simmering water for about 12 to 14 min., depending on the thickness of the fillets. Unwrap the fillets and transfer to a serving plate, pouring any steaming juices from the plastic over the fish.

#### Steamed Salmon with Saffron Vegetable Broth & Couscous

While this is a very simple recipe, the results are decidedly sophisticated. Serve in deep, broad bowls, with good bread to sop up the broth. Serves four.

#### FOR THE COUSCOUS:

1 cup regular (not instant) couscous 1/2 cup hot water 1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper 1 clove garlic, chopped

1 clove garlic, chopped 2 Tbs. chopped flat-leaf parsley

2 Tbs. chopped to 2 Tbs. olive oil

#### FOR THE BROTH:

1 small head fennel (about 8 oz.), cut in 1/4-inch strips

2 cloves garlic, chopped

4 lemon slices, each 1/4 inch thick

1 medium tomato (about 6 oz.), peeled, seeded, and chopped

(Ingredient list continues)

You can make your own steamer if you don't have one. Here, upturned custard cups raise a plate above the water level.





This full-bodied pesto works like a sauce. Sun-dried tomatoes, basil, and garlic flavor the fish (here it's grouper) and create lots of tasty juices.



Steamed clams make their own sauce.
When you steam clams in white wine and seasonings, the clams' own salty liquid makes a delicious broth, especially when you enrich it with a little butter.

1 small onion (about 4 oz.), sliced into thin half-moons
1 small leek (about 4 oz.), white only, washed and julienned
2 ribs celery, diced
1 medium carrot, diced
1/4 tsp. saffron threads
2 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme leaves
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
6 cups water
3 Tbs. olive oil
4 salmon fillets (about 4 oz. each), skin removed

Prepare the couscous—Pour the couscous in a medium bowl; pour the hot water over it and stir in the salt and pepper. Set the couscous aside for about 10 to 15 min. to absorb the water. Add the garlic, parsley, and olive oil; toss together with a fork. Set aside.

Make the broth—Combine the fennel, garlic, lemon slices, tomato, onion, leek, celery, carrot, saffron threads, thyme, salt, pepper, water, and olive oil in a large bowl. You'll use this liquid to steam the fish and couscous.

Steam the couscous and salmon—Line a steaming tray with cheesecloth and pour in the couscous. If space allows, arrange the salmon next to the couscous. If not, put the salmon in another steamer tray and stack it on top of the couscous. Pour the broth into the steamer pan and set it over high heat. When the broth comes to a boil, reduce the heat to medium high and set the steaming tray on top. Steam the salmon and couscous for about 10 min., or until the fish is slightly resilient and no longer translucent. Taste the broth and adjust seasonings.

To serve, portion the couscous into soup bowls. Lay a salmon fillet on top of each pile of couscous and pour the broth and vegetables over all.

#### Steamed Clams with Garlic & Tomato

The broth mixes with the clams' liquor and becomes the essence of clam flavor. Finishing the broth with chopped tomato, flat-leaf parsley, butter, and cracked black pepper turns it into a great sauce. Serves four as an appetizer.

24 littleneck clams, scrubbed thoroughly to remove sand 1 cup dry white wine
Zest of 1 lemon
3 cloves garlic, chopped
1 small tomato, diced small
2 Tbs. chopped flat-leaf parsley
3 Tbs. unsalted butter
Cracked black pepper to taste
4 lemon wedges

Put the clams, wine, zest, and garlic in a large sauté pan; bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium high and cover the pan; the liquid should still bubble vigorously. Steam until the clams open, 5 to 7 min.

Remove the pan from the heat and portion the clams into soup plates. Add the tomato, parsley, and butter to the pan, swirling gently until the butter melts; season with pepper. Pour the sauce into the plates. Serve immediately with a lemon wedge.

Alison Barshak is the chef at Striped Bass, a restaurant in Philadelphia that serves nothing but seafood. ◆



# Wine Choices

#### Look to crisp whites and light reds as balanced partners for delicate seafood

If I had to pick just one wine for all four of these delicious recipes, I'd head straight for Sauvignon Blanc. Also dubbed Fumé Blanc, this refreshing, food-friendly white has flavors of citrus and herbs and a purse-pleasing price tag. Buena Vista, Taft Street, and Robert Pepi make excellent examples. Consider a white Bordeaux (affordable and delicious ones abound) or a Sancerre, from

France's Loire Valley, both made from Sauvignon Blanc grapes.

For each dish individually, lots of options open up. The halibut can handle a wine with a touch of sweetness: try a Gewürztraminer or Riesling whose floral, tropical fruit flavors mesh well with Asian ingredients. If you can find it, try Shaoxing, a potent, sherry-like rice wine from China that's served warm in tiny cups; if not, Japanese

sake would be just as fine. Goodquality domestic sparklers (Gloria Ferrer, Domaine Cameros, and Piper-Sonoma) will pick up on the sesame oil, orange zest, and ginger and set a festive mood.

The steamed clams and the salmon need a dry white wine; again, the Sauvignon Blanc grape will bring out the herbs and lemon in both dishes. Or go with a light Chardonnay, like Fetzer Sundial, or

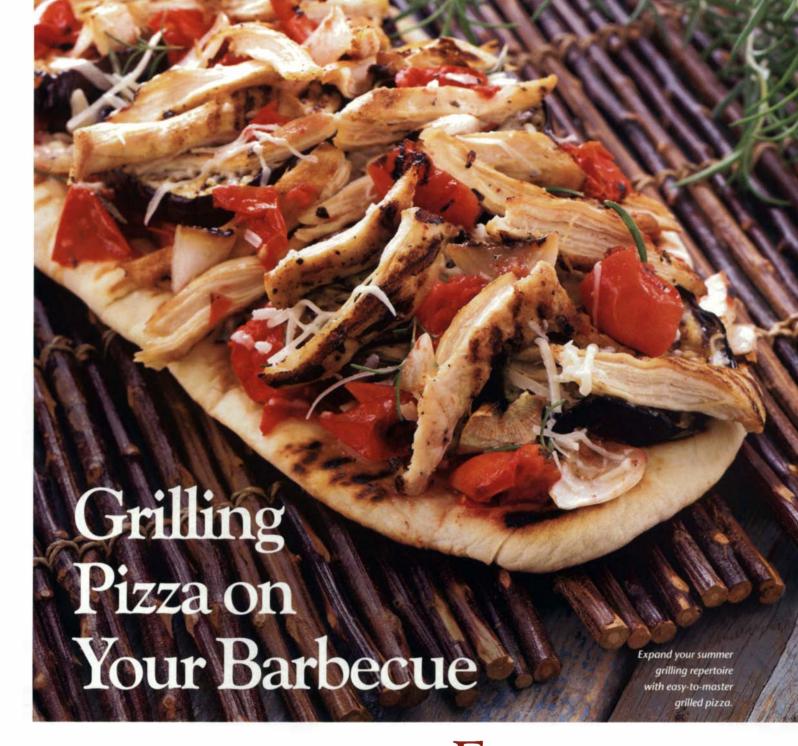
an Italian white like Verdicchio.

Sun-dried tomato pesto is bold enough to make lighter reds possible. Consider an Italian red that's low in tannin, such as Castello d'Albola Chianti or Montepulciano d'Abruzzo by Umani Ronchi. Another choice, though slightly fuller-bodied, is a Rhône red, like Guigal's Côtes du Rhône.

—Rosina Tinari Wilson is a food

and wine writer and teacher.





Yes, you can, and it's easy, too. Get the great smoky flavor and chewy texture of brick-oven pizza using your backyard grill.

BY W. PARK KERR

or years, I harbored the fantasy of owning a real wood-burning pizza oven. Then I discovered that I already had one in my back yard—my outdoor grill. I now grill pizzas at least once a week. They're quick to cook for a midweek meal, and using the grill means I don't need to heat up my kitchen, a real benefit to a west Texan.

Grilled pizzas are killer for entertaining, too. My friends are always fascinated by the technique, and I find myself giving impromptu lessons every time I serve pizza at a party. Standing around the grill with a glass of wine, smelling the toasty dough over the coals—it's also a great culinary gift for guests to take away and do at home.

# MASTER THE TECHNIQUE AND IMPROVISE THE DETAILS

The idea of grilling pizza may seem difficult, but the actual technique is extremely easy once you get the hang of it. You just make a dough, make a topping, heat the grill, and follow the method outlined below.

Use any pizza dough recipe you like, or you can even cheat. I like to use an instant pizza yeast called Viva (available at Williams-Sonoma). I have more success with this kind of yeast than regular active dry. I don't know why it works, but it does.

Sometimes I flavor the dough with a teaspoon of garlic powder or a few tablespoons of crushed rosemary. Frequently I don't even make my own dough: I just pick up a batch from the local pizza parlor.

**Toppings are up to you, too.** My only caveat is that, even when you're fired up to make the most

delicious pizza ever, don't go crazy and pile two inches of toppings on the crust. It will be soggy and fall apart. Do use big-flavored ingredients, though. From simplest to most elaborate, here are a few of my favorites:



Slap the dough right onto the grill.

Don't put it over direct heat,
though—offset heat's the key.



**Bubbles are a good sign**, meaning the first side is cooked.

- ◆ dead simple—extra-virgin olive oil, cracked black pepper, Parmesan cheese;
- ◆ really lazy—tomatoes, basil, extra-virgin olive oil;
- ◆ feel like cooking—pesto (homemade or store-bought), Parmesan, grilled chicken breast;
- ◆ ready for action—grilled-tomato and balsamic sauce with marinated grilled chicken and eggplant (see the recipe opposite).

Offset heat is the key. For equipment, you'll need two wooden pizza peels (wide, flat paddles), a couple of long spatulas, and a bottle of chilled Beaujolais for the cook. If you don't have peels, you can use cutting boards or baking sheets, but I think the wooden pizza peel is the best kitchen tool ever invented. You can do your prep on it, transfer the dough with it, and then use it as a chic rustic platter for the finished pizza.

You also need a grill, obviously. I drive a big gas model, which I prefer because it's easy-on, easy-off, but charcoal grills work well, too. The key to cooking pizza on either type of grill is offset heat, so that the dough isn't directly over the hottest part of the grill.

#### HERE'S HOW TO DO IT

Now that you know that you can use any dough, any topping, and almost any equipment, here's the basic technique:

Heat the grill. For a gas grill, turn on the heat in enough time to get the grill hot, with one burner on high and the other (or others, depending on your model) as low as possible. For charcoal, get your coals white hot, and then brush them into a ring around the perimeter of the grill.

Get the dough on the grill. Shape your dough into a round or oval—whatever fits the shape of



**Lift the dough and take a look.** An array of light grill marks means perfection. Heavy charring would mean starting again.



**Get out of the kitchen!** Author Park Kerr grills everything for his pizza, including the sauce.

your grill best. Fold the dough in half, lift it, slap it on the cool part of the grill, and unfold it so the whole crust is on the cool part. (No, you don't need to grease the grill.)

**Cook the first side.** Close the lid and wait about three minutes. Lift the lid and look at the dough; it should start bubbling on top. Gingerly lift the edge with a spatula to look for light-brown grill marks, but not too much browning. If the bottom looks right, slide the dough onto the peel with the spatulas. Close the lid to the grill to preserve the heat.

By the way, you're guaranteed to burn the first pizza, so don't make any topping for it, just play with it, feel the fire, feed it to the dog. If you want to halfcook some pizzas ahead of time to feed a big crowd later, you can stop here and leave the half-cooked rounds of dough on the peels at room temperature for a few hours. Continue with the following steps when you're ready to eat.

Add the topping. Dust the second peel lightly with cornmeal or flour. Invert the dough onto this peel so the raw side is down. Add your topping. You may be tempted to invert the dough directly back onto the grill and add the toppings there, but as one who has no more arm hair to singe, I know that topping the pizza off the grill is the best way.

Finish the pizza. With the peel, slide the pizza back onto the cool zone of the grill and close the lid. This time you'll cook the pizza for about 10 minutes, again until the bottom shows nice grill marks and is slightly crisp but not burned. Slide the finished pizza off the grill, cut it into manageable slices, and eat.

### **Grilled Pizza with Tomato-Balsamic**

#### Sauce, Chicken & **Eggplant**

I like to grill the sauce and toppings for the pizzas, as well as the dough, to get laver upon layer of smoky flavor. Yields 2 large or 3 medium pizzas.

#### FOR THE DOUGH:

1 lb. (3½ cups) all-purpose flour 1 package instant pizza yeast 1 Tbs. sugar 1 Tbs. salt 11/4 cups hot water 2 Tbs. olive oil

#### FOR THE TOPPING:

1/4 cup lemon juice 3 Tbs. olive oil Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste 4 cloves garlic, minced 1/4 tsp. dried red pepper flakes 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, pounded 1 small eggplant, sliced 1/4 inch thick, brushed with olive oil ⅓ cup grated pecorino romano or Parmesan cheese

# Wine Choices

#### Choose reds with a hint of spice and smoke

reds that stand up to a smoky grilled crust and the layers of flavor that top it, you have plenty of options. Keep the wines easy-drinking, light- to medium-bodied, and preferably inexpensive. Pinot Noirs such as Napa Ridge and Cameros

For flavorful

Creek's Fleur de Cameros accentuate the smokiness and black pepper in the dish. Among Zinfandels, Ravenswood's Vintner's Blend and Rosenblum's Cuvée deliver great spice at a great price. Or try Italian reds (Chianti or Barbaresco) or California reds made from Italian grapes, such

as Barberas or the (alas, pricier) Sangiovese and Nebbiolos. Steer clear of big, tannic Cabernets and Merlots: unless you top your pizza with lamb or duck, those wines will steamroll it even flatter than it already is. -Rosina Tinari Wilson is a food and wine writer

and teacher.

#### FOR THE SAUCE:

8 large plum tomatoes, halved and oiled 1 large onion, halved and oiled 1 clove garlic, minced 1 Tbs. chopped fresh rosemary 1 Tbs. balsamic or red-wine vinegar 2 Tbs. olive oil Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Make the dough. In a large bowl, whisk the flour, yeast, sugar, and salt to mix. Add the water and olive oil, stir until partially mixed, and knead until smooth and silky, about 5 min. with an electric mixer and dough hook or 12 min. by hand. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm spot until doubled in bulk, about 1½ hours. Punch down lightly and refrigerate until ready to roll.

Make the topping. Combine the lemon juice, olive oil, salt, pepper, garlic, and red pepper flakes in a nonaluminum dish. Add the pounded chicken and marinate in the refrigerator at least 2 hours but not more than 6 hours.

Cook the chicken on a hot grill until no longer pink inside, about 10 min. total. Let cool slightly before cutting or tearing into shreds. Season the oiled eggplant slices with salt and pepper and grill until soft and slightly charred, turning once, about 5 min. total. Keep the chicken and eggplant at room temperature.

Make the sauce. Cook the tomatoes and onion on the hot grill until softened and slightly charred, 8 to 10 min. Remove from the grill and let cool slightly. Chop the tomatoes and onion coarse and mix in a bowl with the garlic, rosemary, vinegar, olive oil, salt, and pepper to make a chunky sauce. Taste and adjust seasonings.

Assemble the pizza. Divide the dough into 2 or 3 pieces, depending on the size pizza you want. Roll them into ovals or rounds, according to the shape of your grill. Cook one pizza at a time, following the method starting on p. 56, topping first with some sauce, then some eggplant and chicken, and finally with a sprinkling of cheese.

Park Kerr makes pizzas in El Paso, Texas, with his wife and young son. He is the founder of the El Paso Chile Company and the author of five cookbooks, including the recent series called Beans, Chiles, and Tortillas from William Morrow.



Just a few minutes away from delicious grilled pizza. The final stage of cooking crisps the dough and melts the cheese.

# Nougat Glacé— Cold, Creamy, and Easier than Ice Cream

A mix of meringue, whipped cream, fruit, and nuts makes an irresistible dessert

BY ROLAND PASSOT

From the cooking station in my restaurant, I often hear customers ask their waiter to describe nougat glacé. "It's a creamy, frozen dessert from Provence—a mix of Italian meringue, whipped cream, fruit, and caramelized nuts." The tantalizing description almost always leads to an order, and after a taste of nougat glacé, my customers fall in love with its rich yet fruity flavor, light-as-air body, and subtle crunch.

I like *nougat glacé* for all of those traits. But as a chef, I also like that it's easy to make, that I can make it ahead of time, and that I can flavor and serve the dessert in a number of ways.

#### TRADITIONAL FLAVORS: FRUIT, NUTS, HONEY

Nougat glacé gets its name from being frozen (glacé means iced in French) and from the addition of nuts and honey, which are reminiscent of nougat—a chewy

An Italian meringue begins with a cooked sugar syrup. As the sugar melts, wash down the inside of the pot with a pastry brush dipped in water to prevent crystals from forming.



Get a feel for the hard-ball stage. Dip a bit of the syrup into ice water and then roll it between your fingers. It should form a firm but pliable ball.

candy made with honey, walnuts, almonds, and sometimes pistachios—which is a favorite in Provence.

The honey in *nougat glacé* (traditionally lavender honey) is cooked in the sugar syrup that makes the meringue. The nuts are made into nougatine, a hard, candy-like mix of nuts and caramelized sugar, that's crushed and added to the dessert for a toasted flavor and crunchy texture.

The fruits mixed into nougat glacé can be dried, candied, or a mix. I don't advise fresh fruit, however, because the high water content would make the dessert runny. I like to soak the fruit in a little liqueur, such as Cointreau or Triple Sec, which helps soften the fruit and gives the dessert a little kick.

Nougat glacé is flavorful on its own, but you can enhance it with an accompanying sauce, such as a chocolate sauce or *crème anglaise* or with a fruit coulis made from raspberries, blackberries, or kiwis.

#### A FEW TOOLS MAKE THINGS EASY

*Nougat glacé* isn't difficult to make, but there are a few pieces of equipment that make the job even easier:

- ◆ A sugar pan—a heavy, unlined copper pot with a pour spout—is ideal for making the sugar syrup needed for the meringue, though a heavy-based stainless-steel saucepan will also work.
- ◆ A pastry brush is useful for washing down the



sides of the pan as the sugar syrup cooks to prevent crystals from forming.

- ◆ A candy thermometer is important to check the temperature of the sugar syrup.
- ◆ A free-standing mixer is better than a hand-held one because the egg whites and sugar syrup need to be mixed together while the beaters are moving and must mix until cooled, from 10 to 15 minutes.

# PULLING THE DESSERT TOGETHER REQUIRES A LITTLE TIMING

The trickiest part of making *nougat glacé* comes with the making of the Italian meringue, a mixture of beaten egg whites and a cooked sugar syrup. Ideally, the whites should be mixed to the proper stiffness just as the syrup reaches the correct temperature of 248°F, which is known as the hard-ball stage. I do this by beginning to mix the whites about halfway through the syrup's cooking time. If the syrup cooks faster than the whites beat, add a little bit of water to the syrup

to bring its temperature down. If, on the other hand, the peaks of the egg whites are in danger of becoming too stiff, turn off the mixer until the syrup is ready.

When the egg whites are stiff and the syrup is ready, the syrup is poured into the whites in a slow, thin stream between the side of the bowl and the moving beaters. Make sure the syrup doesn't run into the beaters. If it does, it will be flung to the sides of the bowl, where it will harden and not get mixed in.

Most of the preparation can be done in advance. The meringue can be stored for a day or two, covered in the refrigerator. You can also make the nougatine a day or two ahead and store it in an airtight container. The fruits need to be chopped fine and soaked for at least an hour in the liqueur, so do that before you plan to assemble the dessert. And the whipped cream can hold for a few hours in the refrigerator until you're ready to pull everything together.

Careful mixing keeps the *nougat glacé* airy. Once the four elements of the *nougat glacé*—the

More refined than ice cream but just as cool. With nougat glacé, you get the rich, creamy satisfaction of ice cream without needing an ice-cream maker.



Mixing it all together.
The author recommends folding the nougatine, fruit, and whipped cream into the meringue as quickly and as gently as possible to avoid

a loss of volume.

meringue, the nougatine, the fruit, and the whipped cream—are ready, the rest is a matter of mixing. The nougatine, the fruit, and the whipped cream are gently folded into the meringue. I often do this in two steps—half the nougatine, half the fruit, half the whipped cream—to prevent overmixing, which causes a loss of volume and lightness.

There are many ways to shape *nougat glacé*. I freeze it in individual molds, so I can take them out as they're ordered, but you can put the mixture in a large terrine to slice it after it's been frozen. You can also freeze the *nougat glacé* in a plain bowl and then shape it into oval scoops, called quenelles, using two large spoons. However you serve it, chill the plates to keep the *nougat glacé* from melting quickly, and serve it with a fruit coulis for a pretty presentation.



The dessert needs to freeze for at least 12 hours, so make it the day before you want to serve it. *Yields 8 cups; serves ten to twelve.* 

#### FOR THE NOUGATINE:

½ cup sugar

3 Tbs. water; more for wiping down the saucepan ½ cup almonds, whole or sliced, toasted and skinned ¾ cup hazelnuts, toasted and skinned

#### FOR THE ITALIAN MERINGUE:

1/3 cup sugar

2 Tbs. honey

1/4 cup water

3 egg whites

1 Tbs. lemon juice

2 cups whipping cream, beaten to soft peaks
1½ cups mixed dried fruit (cherries, cranberries, raisins,
apricots, pineapples) or mixed candied fruit, chopped into
small pieces and soaked for at least 1 hour in ¼ cup
Cointreau or other liqueur or brandy

Raspberry Coulis (see recipe at right) Candied orange zest for garnish (optional) Make the nougatine—Lightly oil a baking sheet. In a sugar pan or a stainless-steel saucepan, combine the sugar and water. Cook over medium heat until the sugar melts. Do not stir once the mixture has boiled. Brush the sides of the saucepan with a wet brush to remove any stray sugar crystals, which can burn. Cook until the mixture is a deep golden caramel. Add the nuts. Mix vigorously with a wooden spoon and stir until the nuts are completely coated. Pour the mixture onto the baking sheet and spread it out with a spatula. Be carefulcooked sugar is hot. Let the mixture cool. When completely cool, chop it with a sharp knife

until the pieces are about the same size as the chopped fruit and reserve in a small bowl.

Prepare the meringue—In a sugar pan or a stainless-steel saucepan, combine the sugar, honey, and water. Bring to a boil over high heat and cook, brushing down the sides of the pan with water to prevent crystals. Your goal is the hard-ball stage, about 248°F, which should take about 20 min. When the sugar reaches about 230°, begin beating the egg whites (preferably in a free-standing mixer) until soft peaks form. Add the lemon juice and continue to beat until the whites are stiff but not grainy. Pour the hard-ball sugar syrup into the egg whites, avoiding the moving beaters and the side of the bowl. Mix continuously on high speed until the bottom of the mixing bowl feels cool, 10 to 15 min.

Put it all together—Strain the soaked fruit and discard the excess liqueur. Fold half the chopped nougatine, half the fruit, and half the prepared whipped cream into the meringue. Repeat with the remaining ingredients.

Pour the *nougat glacé* into an 8-cup bowl (from which to scoop quenelles), an 8-cup terrine (for slices), or individual molds. If using a terrine or molds, line with plastic wrap, with extra plastic hanging over the sides. Use the plastic to cover the top of the mold and to help pull the *nougat glacé* out of the mold after it's been frozen. Cover with more plastic wrap and freeze for at least 12 hours and up to 3 days. Serve with raspberry coulis and garnish with candied zest, if you like.

#### Raspberry Coulis

I like to leave the coulis tart to counter the sweet *nougat glacé*, but you can add a little sugar for a sweeter version. *Yields*  $\frac{2}{3}$  *cup*.

6 oz. ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups) very ripe raspberries, or frozen, thawed Juice from  $\frac{1}{2}$  lemon Sugar to taste

In a blender, purée the raspberries with the lemon juice. Add sugar, if desired. Strain through a fine sieve. Cover with plastic wrap and keep chilled until ready to use.

Roland Passot is the chef/owner of La Folie in San Francisco and of Left Bank in Larkspur, California.



Pretty shapes from two spoons. The elegant ovals can also be shaped using an elongated ice-cream scoop. Alternatively, you can freeze the nougat glacé in individual molds or in a terrine to be sliced.

# Layering Flavors in a Vegetable Terrine

The key is letting each layer of rich tomato mousse set before adding the crisp-tender vegetable accent

BY JAMES PETERSON



Author Jim Peterson was first inspired by a photo to try making a terrine. Almost twenty years later, he still has fun creating new variations.

he first time I saw a vegetable terrine was in a bookstore in 1977. I was immediately enchanted by a beautiful picture on the back cover of a French cookbook: slices of a multicolored terrine surrounded by a rosy-pink tomato sauce. Inspired, I rushed home to try to duplicate this beauty in my own kitchen.

In the years since, I've served many brightly colored vegetable terrines, usually as a first course for fancy dinners. Vegetable terrines, named for the loaf-shaped container in which they're assembled, are not only beautiful to look at, but they're also light, delicious, versatile—almost any vegetable works in a terrine—and quite spectacular when sliced. You also need to make them in advance of serving, which makes a vegetable terrine a perfect do-ahead course.

#### FIGURING OUT THE FILLING

There are several kinds of fillings for vegetable terrines, none terribly difficult, but each with its own



A sliced terrine shows off its bright interior. Layers of leeks, carrots, green beans, and roasted peppers add flavor, color, and a subtle textural contrast.

## Begin by making a rich chicken broth



Put the greens from six of the leeks in a 6-quart pot and cover with the chicken wings. The wings keep the leeks from floating and interfering with skimming. Pour in cold water to just cover the wings and heat until the water starts to simmer. Reduce the heat to medium low and maintain a gentle simmer for two hours, skimming periodically and discarding any fat or froth.



After two hours of simmering and skimming, add the tomatoes. Simmer another hour, skimming occasionally.



Strain the broth into a smaller pot, pressing down on the wings. Discard the cooked wings. Simmer the broth, skimming the fat and froth, until it's reduced to 1¾ cups.

pitfalls. One of the most common methods is to make a mousseline filling by puréeing raw meat or fish with egg whites and then slowly working heavy cream into the mixture to lighten it. While a well-made mousseline can make a delicious foil for the vegetables, its rich flavor can overwhelm the vegetables' delicacy. Another problem with using a mousseline is that the terrine has to be cooked. Because vegetables can't be added to a terrine raw (they'll release too much water), using a mousseline means you have to cook the vegetables twice, which will cause them to lose color and flavor.

Another filling used in vegetable terrines is aspic, a savory jelly made from clarified meat stock. The problem with this kind of filling is that many of us Americans don't like aspic, especially the somewhat rubbery aspic that's needed to make a terrine solid enough to slice.

A mousse filling gives the terrine structure yet keeps it light, which is why I like it best. My favorite filling, the one shown here, is a kind of savory mousse closely related to Bavarian cream, which gets its strength from natural gelatin and its lightness from whipped cream. In this case, the gelatin

comes from a chicken broth that's flavored with tomatoes and slowly reduced to concentrate its flavor and gelatin, which comes from the chicken's skin and bones. I mix the broth with whipped cream that's been seasoned with salt and pepper. The result is a delicately flavored mousse that holds its shape when chilled but that isn't rubbery.

The proportion of broth to cream and the concentration of the broth have to be well thought out. If there isn't enough natural gelatin in the mousse, the terrine won't set and will fall apart when you unmold it or try to slice it. If there's too much gelatin, the terrine will be too stiff and will have an unpleasant texture.

Because the stock reduces on the stove for hours, you'll want to make it ahead, even a day or two before you're ready to assemble the terrine. Keep the stock refrigerated, but before folding it into the whipped cream, bring it back to a loose consistency by heating it gently until it reaches room temperature.

#### **BOLD, BRIGHT VEGETABLES WORK BEST**

For my terrine, I like to use vegetables with flavors assertive enough to stand up to the filling. A variety



Add the tarragon or basil to the broth and remove the pot from the heat immediately. Let the broth sit for 15 minutes off the heat and then strain it into a clean container. Refrigerate if not using right away.

## Have all your vegetables ready for layering



**Cook the vegetables to keep their color.** Blanch the green beans, roast the peppers, and sweat the carrots in a little olive oil.



Trim and clean the leeks. Cut off the hairy root and cut the greens off the leeks where they start to turn pale green. Reserve both the whites and greens. Shave the outer dark green leaves remaining on the green end of the whites. Cut the whites partially in half lengthwise, leaving about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch attached at the base, and rinse the leeks under cold running water.



Plunge the reserved leek greens into boiling salted water and boil until very supple, about 12 minutes. Remove, rinse with cold water until cool, and pat dry. Do the same with the leek whites. Finish cutting the whites in half after cooking.

## Make a thick mousse



To make the mousse, season heavy cream with salt, white pepper, and sherry vinegar. Whip to medium stiffness in a chilled bowl with a chilled whisk. Fold the room-temperature broth into the whipped cream.

of wild mushrooms, each type sautéed and flavored differently than the other (some sprinkled with a little garlic, others with shallots; chopped marjoram on another, thyme on another) makes a delicious and complex-flavored terrine.

In the terrine shown here, I've chosen leeks as the dominant vegetable because their flavor remains bright and strong even when served cold, and because they look dramatic when sliced, especially against the pink backdrop of the tomato mousse. Carrots and green beans, though their delicate flavor remains subtle, look pretty in the terrine, as do the more flavorful roasted peppers.

# A LINING FOR THE MOLD IS PRETTY AND PRACTICAL

In a meat terrine, a lining of fat is essential for keeping the terrine moist. In this vegetable terrine, the lining is mainly decorative, although it can help make removing the finished terrine easier. When preparing a lining, I try to use one that makes sense with the flavors in the dish rather than something that's completely unrelated to what's in the terrine. In the recipe given here, leek greens are an obvious—and very dramatic—choice.

# LETTING EACH LAYER SET BEFORE ADDING THE NEXT IS CRUCIAL

The only obstacle to constructing this kind of terrine is that you must get each layer of mousse to set in the terrine before you can add the next layer. If the layers are not set, one layer may sink into the next, which won't look good. On the other hand, allowing the layers to firm up too much may cause them to slide apart when it's time to cut a slice. A few tricks keep your assembly running smoothly and help guarantee a perfectly set terrine.

- Have everything but the mousse cold and dry. Before you begin assembling the terrine, be sure the vegetables you're layering are dry and chilled. I'll even chill the lined terrine for a few minutes before assembling.
- ◆ Don't let your unused mousse set before you've spread it in the mold. The best approach is to work fast, spreading a layer of mousse in the lined mold and then putting the mold in the freezer for a few minutes to firm up. The unused mousse should be left out at room temperature so that it *doesn't* set. Working quickly, you then arrange a layer of vegetables over the first layer of set mousse, spread another layer of room temperature mousse over the

# Assemble all the parts



Separate the leek greens' layers as if finding the opening to a plastic bag. Run your thumb down the center between the layers to open. Line the terrine with these thin membranes, overlapping if necessary. Leave 2 inches hanging over the sides.



Arrange six to eight cooked leek halves lengthwise, end to end, in the terrine, flat side up. Ladle in enough mousse to form a ¼-inch layer.

vegetables, and return the terrine to the freezer until that layer is set.

◆ Chill the finished terrine in the refrigerator for at least four hours before slicing. You may be able to get away with just two hours, but the extra time doesn't hurt. Vegetable terrines can be made up to 24 hours in advance and refrigerated until ready to serve. If they're kept much longer, the vegetables start to lose their color.

# BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF AS YOU CUT THE FIRST BEAUTIFUL SLICE

When it's time to serve the terrine, you need to get it out of the mold without damaging it. If you've lined the terrine, it should slide out easily when you invert it onto a chilled serving platter. If it sticks a little, run a sharp knife carefully around the inside of the walls to loosen it. If you haven't lined the mold, the mousse will likely stick. The best remedy for this is to hold the terrine in a pan of hot water for about 15 seconds, and then run a knife along the inside of the mold before turning the terrine out onto a platter.

Once you have the terrine out of the mold, take a moment to appreciate the applause you'll get when



Slam the terrine on the work surface to drive out any bubbles trapped in the first layer of the mousse. Freeze a few minutes until the mousse sets.

Layer the carrots and add another ladle of mousse over them. Slam the terrine again and freeze until the mousse has set. Repeat the process with the green beans and then the roasted peppers, alternating the colored strips of peppers. End with a fourth layer of mousse.

Add the remaining halved leek whites, flat side up, and fold the strips of leek greens over the leek whites. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least four hours before serving.

## Unmold, slice, and serve



Invert the terrine onto a chilled platter. Run a knife along the inside edge of the pan if it's stubborn.



Slice the terrine into <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>-inch servings. With one hand supporting the sides, cut the terrine with a very sharp serrated knife in a sawing motion using very little force.

you bring it to the table. If the mousse is well made, it should be creamy and delicate. Unfortunately, while this texture makes the best terrine, it can make slicing difficult. Don't try to slice the terrine too thin—about ¾ inch is good—and don't press down with the knife when slicing. With one hand, hold the terrine fairly tightly on either side to keep its walls together. Use a long, thin, very sharp serrated knife and make gentle sawing movements with very little pressure. You'll run into the most resistance when slicing through the first layer of leeks; just be patient and continue sawing gently. If the slices look like they may fall apart, support each slice with a spatula while you're working. Gently transfer the slices to chilled plates.

A light sauce perks up flavor. Most vegetable terrines don't need a sauce because a flavorful filling is enough. But sometimes I find that despite having paid careful attention to seasoning, the terrine needs a little extra zing. My favorite sauce in such cases is a vinaigrette made with good vinegar (sherry vinegar is my favorite), extra-virgin olive oil, and, since the mousse has a tomato flavor, a little chopped tomato. I usually serve the vinaigrette on the side so my guests can take as much as they want.

#### **Vegetable & Tomato Mousse Terrine**

Yields enough to fill a 9- or 10-inch loaf pan or terrine; serves twelve as a first course.

8 to 10 leeks (depending on size; long, thin leeks work best) 4 lb. chicken wings

6 medium tomatoes, chopped coarse, or one 28-oz. can of tomatoes, drained and chopped

1 small bunch fresh tarragon or fresh basil, chopped coarse 2 Tbs. salt (for cooking the leeks)

11/2 cups heavy cream

2 tsp. sherry vinegar

1½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. freshly ground white pepper; more to taste

1/2 lb. carrots, cut into 1/4x2-inch strips, cooked in 1 Tbs. olive oil for 12 to 14 min.

1/4 lb. green beans, preferably haricots verts, trimmed and blanched

2 or 3 bell peppers, (red, green, yellow, or a combination) roasted, peeled, and cut into 1-inch-wide strips

#### FOR THE VINAIGRETTE:

1/3 cup sherry vinegar

<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 tomato, peeled, seeded, and chopped fine

James Peterson, a Fine Cooking contributing editor, is the author of Sauces (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1991), which was named Cookbook of the Year by the James Beard Foundation, Splendid Soups (Bantam Books, 1993) and Fish & Shellfish (Morrow, 1996). ◆



A tomato vinaigrette makes a great accompaniment. Its tangy flavor will complement the rich mousse. (See recipe at left.)

he old saying that you can't judge a book by its cover certainly applies to passionfruit, which can look downright homely. Small, purple, often wrinkly, passionfruit looks like a rubber ball that's lost some air. But it isn't the look of passionfruit that makes it a great ingredient for dessert, it's the fruit's taste—sweet yet tangy, with a refreshing citrus quality.

The flavor of passionfruit's ochre pulp remains vibrant even when mixed with other ingredients. Such flavor intensity is fortunate because passion-fruit doesn't come cheap. Depending on availability, it ranges from 50¢ to as high as \$2 apiece.

The good news is that passion fruit can flavor a dessert with an astonishing intensity. The fruit isn't commonly eaten out of hand, as are apples and oranges. It's more like pomegranate in that its teardrop-shaped pockets of pulp are scooped out and used as an ingredient or as a flavorful accent. For example, I use passion fruit to add unexpected flavor to an American classic, pound cake, in the form of a glaze that's poured over the cake while it's still warm from the oven. I've also found that icy passion fruit sorbet is a refreshing dessert at the end of a big meal.

Although some people might be inclined to believe that passionfruit got its name because people are so passionate about its flavor, the name actually refers to the plant's strikingly beautiful flower and to religion, not amour. Jesuit missionaries in South America saw in the flower symbols of the suffering, or Passion, of Christ.



# Sweet, Citrusy Passionfruit

Scoop its pulp or squeeze its juice to add intense flavor to pound cake, sorbet, and fruit salad

BY DAVID LEBOVITZ

risolos, circuitas intochrancos y Donas O Wells

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#### WRINKLES REVEAL RIPENESS

Ripe passionfruit can have a smooth exterior, but like people, its skin wrinkles as it ages. Wrinkles are a good sign—in the fruit anyway—signifying that the fruit is riper, more aromatic, and more flavorful than a smooth-skinned specimen. The fruit will continue to ripen off the vine, so you may want to keep your passionfruit at room temperature until it begins to dimple. But avoid buying fruits with soft spots or surface

mold; they're too far gone. When selecting passion-fruit, choose those that are large and heavy for their size, which means they contain a lot of pulp inside.

Passionfruit is grown in many global hot spots, including South and Central America, New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii, and, increasingly, California and Florida. With so many locales, the fruit is available almost year-round, although it can be scarce—and therefore more expensive—in the winter months. In the United States, the most widely available passionfruit is the purple Passiflora edulis. Other

Passionfruit is

named for its striking

flower, in which lesuit

missionaries saw sym-

bols of Christ's suffer-

ing, or Passion. The

most common variety

is purple; others may

be yellow or reddish.

varieties, which may be yellow or reddish in color, are available in the U.S. but on a limited scale. Fortunately, many people believe *edulis* has the best flavor among the varieties.

# BE GREEDY WITH THE PULP, THE JUICE—EVEN THE SEEDS

Given the cost of passionfruit, it's wise to strive to use every golden drop. I even eat the small, harmless seeds, adding them to a passionfruit sorbet or compote for a pleasant crunch.

I often use the pulp, seeds and all, as a condiment, as an accent to a plate of fresh fruit for a tropical touch. I use the juice in sauces, compotes, and to flavor glazes, like the one poured over the pound cake in the recipe on p. 73.

To remove the pulp from fresh passion-fruit, slice the fruit in half along its equator with a serrated knife. Separate the halves carefully, as the juices may spill out. Over a bowl, scoop out the pulp and seeds with a spoon, scraping the sides of the fruit to get every bit. Separate the pulp from the seeds to get passionfruit juice by emptying the pulp into a strainer and pressing through with a flexible rubber spatula.

Freeze the pulp to have it on hand. Ripe passionfruit will last only about a week in the refrigerator, but it can be frozen for months without any loss of flavor. You can either freeze the whole fruit, wrapped in plastic, to be scooped at a later date, or the pulp can be

# Accents Desserts



Use a spoon to scoop out the precious pulp. To separate the seeds from the pulp for passionfruit juice, press the pulp through a fine strainer.

The vivid, citrusy flavor of passionfruit pairs well with rich, buttery pound cake.
Holes poked in the cake allow the glaze to flavor it throughout.



spooned into a freezer container or ice-cube trays, tightly sealed, and frozen for up to a year.

Commercially frozen passionfruit purée has be-

come available in some grocery stores. Many of these purées contain added cane sugar; they taste good, if a little sweeter than fresh, and can be an economical way to buy passionfruit.

The recipes that follow show howyou can use passion-fruit to make delicious des-

serts and may inspire you to create your own.

# Passionfruit & Citrus Salad with Coconut Meringues

You can make this refreshing dessert in minutes. Serve it with coconut meringues for a festive touch. Serves four.

2 kiwis, peeled and sliced
2 ripe mangoes, peeled and sliced
2 blood oranges, peeled and sliced
1 ripe star fruit, sliced
1/8 fresh pineapple, sliced
1/3 cup orange juice
2 Tbs. lime juice
1 tsp. sugar, preferably superfine; more to taste
4 passionfruit
Candied orange zest for garnish (optional)
Coconut meringues (recipe below)

Combine the slices of kiwi, mango, blood orange, star fruit, and pineapple in a bowl. Stir together the orange juice, lime juice, and sugar; pour this mixture over the fruit. Split the passionfruit and either spoon the pulp

and seeds over the sliced fruit, or strain the pulp to remove the seeds and then pour over the fruit. Garnish with candied orange zest, if desired. Serve with coconut meringues.

#### **COCONUT MERINGUES:**

These meringues can be made ahead of time and stored in an airtight container until ready to serve.

Yields about 12 pieces, depending on size.

1/2 cup unsweetened coconut flakes 3 large egg whites 6 Tbs. sugar 1 tsp. vanilla extract

Heat the oven to  $300^{\circ}$ F. Spread  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the coconut flakes on a baking sheet. Bake until golden, about 5 min. Lower oven to  $200^{\circ}$ .

Piping coconut meringue.

Beat the egg whites until they form soft peaks. Slowly sprinkle in the sugar while beating until the whites are stiff and glossy. Fold in the vanilla and the remaining untoasted coconut.

Use a pastry bag with a large tip to pipe the meringue into shapes onto an ungreased or parchment-lined

baking sheet. Sprinkle with the toasted coconut and bake for 1 hour. Turn off the oven and let the meringues dry in the oven until crisp, about 2 hours. Cool the meringues completely before removing them from

Use the vibrant passionfruit juice in sauces, compotes,

and glazes.

#### **Passionfruit Sorbet**

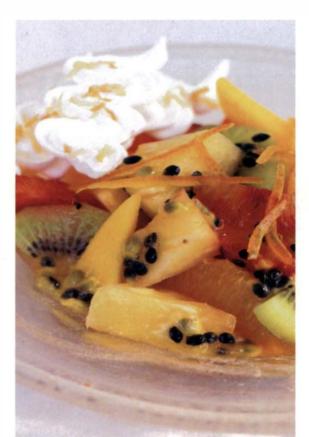
You can make this recipe with fresh pulp or commercially prepared pulp. If using purchased pulp that's been sweetened, use just ¼ cup of sugar. Incorporating the seeds back into the sorbet is a pretty option. Yields 5 cups; serves six.

1 cup passionfruit pulp (from about 12 passionfruit); reserve 2 Tbs. seeds for garnish, if desired 3 cups tangerine juice (from about 8 large tangerines) ½ to ¾ cup sugar

Mix the passionfruit pulp with the tangerine juice.

Put the sugar in a small saucepan with 1 cup of the mixed juice and heat until the sugar dissolves. (If you want a tart taste, use the smaller amount; for a sweeter sorbet, add more sugar.) Add the sugar mixture to the remaining juice and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled. Add the seeds, if desired. The seeds won't change the flavor, but they look dramatic and add a slight crunch. Freeze the mixture in an icecream maker according to the manufacturer's instructions and serve when ready.

If you don't have an ice-cream maker, put the mixture in a bowl in the freezer and stir every half hour until frozen. Before serving, put the freezer-made sorbet in a food processor with the dough blade. Process just long enough to break up the ice crystals for a slushy texture, about 30 seconds.





An exotic fruit salad wakes up the senses. Passionfruit pulp accents the tropical fruits, while coconut meringues and tiny passionfruit seeds add contrasting texture.





You can't see the passionfruit here, but you can sure taste it. The pound cake also benefits from the extra moisture of the passionfruit glaze.

#### **Passionfruit Pound Cake**

The fragrance of passionfruit comes through in a tangy glaze that balances the rich, buttery flavor of this traditional pound cake. Flour and butter amounts are listed by weight (ounces) and volume (cups or tablespoons); use either measurement. Serves eight to ten.

#### FOR THE CAKE:

6¾ oz. (1½ cups) all-purpose flour ¾ tsp. baking powder 6 oz. (12 Tbs.) unsalted butter at room temperature 1 cup plus 2 Tbs. sugar 3 eggs, beaten just to mix, at room temperature 1 tsp. vanilla extract

#### FOR THE GLAZE:

 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup passionfruit juice (from about 6 passionfruit)  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup sugar

Butter and flour a 5x9-inch loaf pan. Line the bottom of the pan with kitchen parchment and butter and flour that. Heat the oven to 350°F.

Sift together the flour and baking powder. In a separate bowl, cream the butter and sugar with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Slowly add the eggs to the mixture. Add the vanilla. Mix the flour and baking powder into the wet ingredients just until the batter is smooth. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake until a toothpick inserted in the cake comes out clean, 55 to 60 min.

Cool the cake in its pan on a wire rack for 30 min. Meanwhile, make the glaze by mixing the passionfruit juice and sugar. For a more sugary crust, don't dissolve the sugar.

With a skewer or long toothpick, poke the top of the pound cake through to the bottom in about 25 places. Spoon two-thirds of the glaze over the top of the cake. Let it sit for about 10 min. Remove the cake from its pan by inverting it on a cooling rack, and pour the remaining glaze over the sides and bottom of the cake. (To keep this neat, put the rack over a sheet pan to collect the glaze that drips off the cake.) Let the cake cool to room temperature, slice, and serve.

#### **SOURCES FOR PASSIONFRUIT**

The best place to buy passionfruit is at your local market in the section that features unusual fruits and vegetables. If your market doesn't carry it and won't order any for you, the following purveyors will ship passionfruit or passionfruit products. You may have to buy whole fruit by the case (which may hold 25 to 45 fruits), but the good news is that passionfruit freezes well. Frieda's and Trueke will also tell you which stores near you carry their products.

Frieda's Inc., PO Box 58488, Los Angeles, CA 90058; 800/241-1771. Whole fruit.

Melissa's World Variety Produce, Mail Order Division, PO Box 21127, Los Angeles, CA 90021; 800/468-7111. Whole fruit.

Trueke International, 236 Stanford Ave., #217, Palo Alto, CA 94304; 415/323-0677; fax, 415/324-1175. Frozen pulp and sweetened juice concentrate.

David Lebovitz is a pastry cook at Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California, where passionfruit desserts are often featured on the menu.

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#### Getting a feel for kneading



**Dig in with the heels of your palms.** With your arms extended, push the dough away from you.





Fold the dough onto itself to form a loose ball. Slide the dough back to its original spot on the counter.

Give the dough a quarter turn. Repeat the process, establishing a rhythm of push, fold, turn. Kneading is one of the most fundamental—and therapeutic—tasks in baking. Though it has indisputable tactile pleasures, it's also vital to successful breadmaking. Kneading develops gluten, which gives bread dough its elasticity and traps air bubbles created by the yeast. Gluten begins to form as soon as flour is moistened, but kneading further develops and strengthens it.

You can knead dough in a food processor or a standing mixer, but to truly understand the process, it's best to knead by hand. Every batch of dough is different, depending on the recipe, the flour, the temperature, even your disposition. Learning to appreciate these subtleties begins by getting comfortable with the feel of bread dough.

Get set, and know your recipe. Knead on a clean, smooth surface that's at a comfortable height. Ideally, you should be able to rest your palms on the surface a few inches in front of you with your arms straight. If the surface is too high, consider standing on a step stool.

Flour your hands and the counter to keep the dough from sticking. Most doughs start out shaggy and sticky and become smooth as you knead. If the dough is still very sticky after a few minutes of kneading, sprinkle a little more flour on the dough, on the counter, and on your hands. Addjust a little flour at a time; too much will toughen the dough.

Be aware that doughs containing eggs, butter, or other moist ingredients often stay sticky. Pay close attention to how the recipe describes the dough's final consistency.

## KNEADING IS RHYTHMIC, WITH SOME BREAKS IN THE BEAT

You can easily knead a single-loaf dough with one hand, leaving the other free to add more flour or to answer the phone, but larger batches require both hands.

Three steps to kneading. The action of kneading includes pushing, folding, and turning, as shown in the photos at left. As you knead,

# To truly understand the process, it's best to knead by hand.

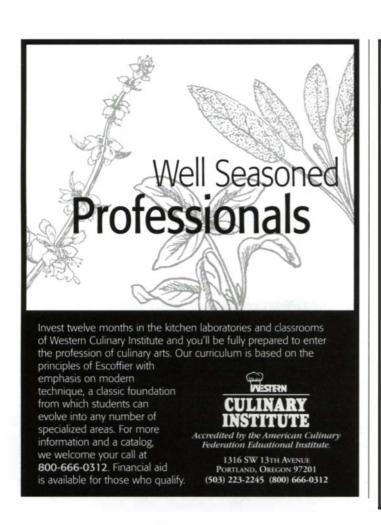
you will develop a soothing rhythm of push, fold, and turn as the dough takes shape.

Many bakers purposely break the rhythm every few minutes to lift the dough high off the counter and slap it back down. Aside from making a gratifyingly loud smacking sound, this helps bring the dough into a cohesive shape. Occasional rests are also good for the dough, so don't feel compelled to knead nonstop.

#### FULLY KNEADED DOUGH IS SMOOTH

Many bakers compare the feel of well-kneaded dough to that of an earlobe. The dough will look and feel smooth, and an indentation made with your finger will spring back. Small bubbles may appear under the surface, and the dough will be supple and elastic. You should be able to stretch a small piece of well-kneaded dough to twice its size.

The time it takes to knead depends on your dough, your



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#### BASICS

kneading technique, and environmental influences like humidity. Use the time suggested in your recipe as a guide, but pay closer attention to the feel of the dough.

It's almost impossible to overwork dough by hand. When dough is overworked, the gluten breaks down and the dough returns to a soggy mess. In a machine, however, you can quickly overwork dough, which is another reason I prefer to knead by hand.

# How to handle a chef's knife

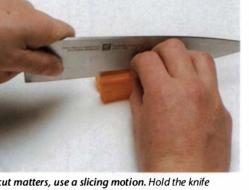
Ask any serious cook to name the most essential kitchen tool, and chances are the answer will be a chef's knife. Also called a French knife or a cook's knife, a chef's knife has a wide, heavy blade and is used to chop, slice, and dice nearly everything. The blade can range from 6 to 14 inches long, though 8- and 10-inch models are most common.

Before you buy a chef's knife, ask to hold it. Panto-

mime chopping and slicing to feel the weight and balance of the knife. The weight of the blade should do most of the work; it should feel solid but not so heavy that it will tire your hand.

If your hands are big, check that the heel of the blade is large enough to accommodate your fingers without smashing them on the cutting board as you bring the blade down. If your hands are small, be sure you can reach comfortably around the handle.

Try using your wrist as a pivot, raising and lowering the tip of the knife. Then keep the tip stable on a cutting board, lift the handle, and rock back and forth on the blade. Different manufacturers have a different amount of curve to their blades; choose a knife that feels comfortable as you bring the handle up and down. For the best balance, be sure the tail of the blade (known as the tang) runs the full length of the handle.



When the look of the cut matters, use a slicing motion. Hold the knife parallel to the cutting board and slice downward. For added control, move your thumb and index finger onto the sides of the blade.

#### HANDLING THE KNIFE TO FIT THE TASK

For precise cutting, you want to grip the knife's handle



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close to the blade. You can even move your thumb or index finger (or both) onto the base of the blade—not along the spine—for extra guidance. For less precise cuts, you can grip the knife a little farther back on the handle. The fingers of your other hand, which anchor the food to the cutting surface, should always be curled away from the blade for safety.

Two basic blade positions for most chores. Most cutting can be done either by holding the knife above the cutting board and slicing downward with a forward motion, or by keeping the tip of the knife on the cutting board and lifting the handle to chop or mince with a rocking motion. The former provides more control and is used when slicing a julienne, for example,



For quick chopping and mincing, keep the tip of the blade on the board. Lift the handle and rock it back and forth over the ingredient. For this cut, your hand can be farther back on the handle.

or when dicing. Chopping and mincing, especially herbs, can be accomplished with great speed by using the rocking motion.

For most cuts, the center of the blade gets the most workout. The tip of the blade is used for cutting delicate foods such as cooked eggs and mushrooms, while the heel can be used like a cleaver for heavier work, such as slicing through winter squash or cutting the wing tips from a chicken.

The wide chef's blade is greatfor smashing aromatic ingredients, such as garlic, ginger, scallions, lemongrass, and herbs, to release their scent. You can do this either by smacking the ingredients with the broad side of the blade or by laying the knife flat on top of the food and pounding it with your fist—a quick way to release garlic cloves from their papery skins.

A few things to remember when using a chef's knife—or any knife, for that matter—is to keep the blade sharp and to use the proper cutting surface. Cut on a hard wooden or plastic surface; metal, glass, or stone will dull knives quickly. Hone your knives every time you use them (see Basics, Fine Cooking #4) because the safest knife is a sharp one.

Molly Stevens, a contributing editor to Fine Cooking, is a chef/instructor at the New England Culinary Institute in Essex. Vermont.



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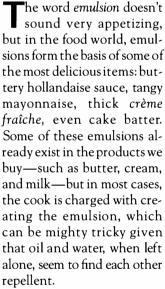
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# Emulsify Oil and Water for a Creamy Texture

Coax these unfriendly ingredients together with the right proportions, a vigorous whisk, and a matchmaking emulsifier

BY SHIRLEY O. CORRIHER



So to make an emulsion, we don't leave oil and water alone. We bind them into what we hope is a fairly stable, creamy blend, in which either the oily ingredient is dispersed in droplets throughout the watery ingredient, or the water droplets are dispersed in the oil.

#### SURFACE TENSION MAKES LIQUIDS STAND APART

Before we can get the two substances together, it's important to understand what keeps them separate. Surface tension is the dividing factor.

Imagine that you've spilled some water on a marble countertop. Instead of running out into a thin pool, the water beads up. The water molecules in the center of the droplets are all being pulled equally by neighboring molecules on their sides, top, and bottom. The molecules on the surface, however, are being pulled to the sides and down, but there's no water on top to pull them up. These surface molecules are being held by this sideward and downward pull—surface tension.

When two ingredients that don't mix are put next to each other, like the oil and vinegar shown at right, their own sur-



**Get vinaigrettes that don't break** and mayonnaise that doesn't curdle by understanding the chemistry of emulsions.

face tensions keep them apart: the vinegar is drawn out and down into itself, and the oil is drawn out and down into itself.

#### BREAK THE TENSION WITH AN EMULSIFIER

To get oil and vinegar to start mingling, we need to lower the surface tension of one of the ingredients, making it "juicy" so it can run between the droplets of the other liquid.

To do this, we need to introduce a third ingredient, called an emulsifier. Chemical emulsifiers are natural or man-made molecules with one end that dissolves in the oily substance and another end that dissolves in the watery substance. Examples

## Oil and vinegar will mix



**Oil and vinegar won't willingly blend** because their surface tensions keep them apart. Even when poured on top of each other, each liquid will draw into itself and resist blending.

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of natural chemical emulsifiers are lecithin and phospholipids in egg yolks.

If you look at the middle illustration below, you'll see that an emulsifier has been added to the vinegar. The "water" ends of the emulsifier have dissolved in the vinegar, and the "oil" ends are sticking out from the surface. This lowers the surface tension of the vinegar, so the vinegar is now "juicy" and able to run between the oil droplets.

Emulsifiers also keep droplets of liquids from running together. These protruding emulsifier molecules not only affect surface tension, but they also coat the droplets of one liquid and act as separators to keep the droplets themselves from running together. You can see these separate droplets of oil surrounded by the "juicy" vinegar in the illustration below right. Without an emulsifier, tiny droplets of a liquid run together to make larger ones, which run together to make even larger ones, until they separate out of the potential emulsion.

Emulsifiers that have larger pieces of molecules sticking out are more effective than those with very short protrusions. Fine powders like dry mustard or paprika can "dust" oil droplets and help somewhat in keeping them apart; these would be considered physical rather than chemical emulsifiers. Powders aren't nearly as effective as chemical emulsifiers, but large quanti-

and keeping an emulsion, they're not the only tools. Two other factors are required.

First, you need mechanical action to break the liquid with the stronger surface tension into tiny droplets. This is usually achieved with a blender, a food processor, or a whisk.

hollandaise that fail most often are the ones that don't have enough vinegar, lemon juice, or other watery liquid to go between the drops of oil or butter.

Sometimes you'll start out with the right proportion of juicy liquid to make a good emulsion, but as the sauce is held warm in a pan with a lot of open surface area, the liquid evaporates to the point that the sauce separates—the oily molecules run back together again. Chefs' tricks to save such a sauce are to whisk in water, vinegar, or ice, anything to add back some watery liquid to allow enough to go between the drops.

This same type of imbalance can occur when you add too much oil to a mayonnaise or a vinaigrette. It's fine when there is enough watertype liquid to run between the oil droplets, but at a certain point, there won't be enough water to go between the fat. Separation—and disappointment—result.

appointment—result.

Shirley O. Corriher, a Fine
Cooking contributing editor,
teaches food science and cooking
classes across the country.

# EMULSIFIERS Ingredients containing chemical emulsifiers egg yolks milk cream butter Ingredients that work as physical emulsifiers dry mustard prepared mustard any finely ground herb or spice

ties of powders can actually create a stable emulsion. Some poppy-seed dressings have so much confectioners' sugar, dry mustard, and paprika that they hold together without a chemical emulsifier.

confectioners' sugar

#### EMULSIFIERS NEED HELP: ACTION AND GOOD PROPORTIONS

While emulsifiers are enormously important in making

Second, you must have a sufficient quantity of the "juicy" liquid (the liquid with the lowered surface tension) that goes between the drops. Even when the droplets are coated with the emulsifier and bounce off each other, if there isn't enough liquid to go between the drops, they'll be forced together and won't form an emulsion. The recipes for mayonnaise and

### with an emulsifier's help

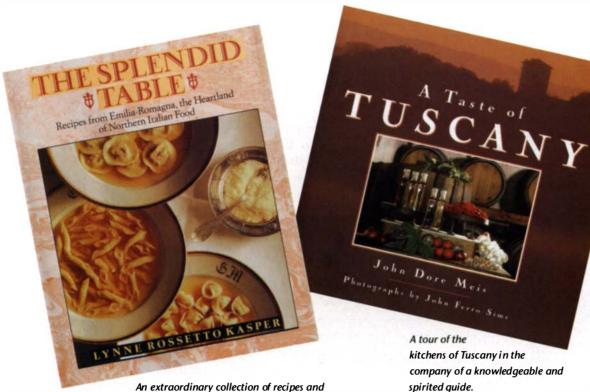


An emulsifier added to the vinegar makes it "juicy" by lowering its surface tension. The vinegar is now better able to flow around the droplets of oil, especially when the oil droplets have been broken up by whisking.



**Droplets of oil coated with an emulsifier can't run together easily** because the emulsifier molecules act like separators.

JUNE/JULY 1996 **79** 



An extraordinary collection of recipes and culinary lore from Italy's Emilia-Romagna region.

# Savoring the Soul of Italian Cooking

Authentic lore and recipes for lasagne, risotto, and long-cooked ragùs from four cooks who love Italy

BY MAGGIE BLYTH KLEIN

Though I like dim sum and corn fritters just fine, pasta, salami, risotto—almost anything Italian—is the food that's closest to my heart. When I travel to Italy, I never fail to be inspired by the rich artisanal traditions and the bountiful markets there. Tables overflowing with ripe tomatoes and baskets of leafy broccoli raab, wheels of handcrafted cheeses, and plump sausages that hang from the stalls all speak of a strong

culinary heritage and a deep appreciation of the earth and its offerings.

When I'm back at home and I need a taste of Tuscan cooking or crave one of the deeply flavored ragùs from Emilia-Romagna, there are a few cookbooks that I turn to again and again. Like an Italian grandmother in my kitchen, they've taught me how to make fresh pasta and what to do with a basketful of the first artichokes of spring.

The Splendid Table, by Lynne Rossetto Kasper, occupies the premier position among my Italian cookbooks. This magnificent collection of recipes and culinary lore is a celebration of the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy, written by a woman who loves the area completely and absolutely. Though few Americans may know this region by name, many of the Italian foods we love best—Parmesan cheese, lasagne, risotto, and prosciutto—are in fact specialties of Emilia-Romagna.

Each recipe is prefaced with an excellent, utterly rel-

Poor," is perhaps the best. None of the more than 50 pasta recipes are commonplace. A few are both savory and sweet (pasta with fresh figs), many are for long-cooked ragus with deep, rich, complex flavors, quite a few are stuffed, some are simple (spaghetti with anchovies and melting onions), some are rustic, others are complex (tortellini pie), and several are refined (parsley pasta with tomatoes and fresh peas).

The chapter called "A Guide to Ingredients" gives particularly useful information about the important ingredients of the region. Some of the essays here offer fresh insights into pantry staples like flour and butter—that cooks often take for granted; others on cotechino sausage and porcini mushrooms, for example, cover foods that may not be so familiar to readers. Kasper devotes six pages to balsamic vinegar. Read them and soon this vinegar will become as essential to your

# David's recipe for Beans in the Oven is simplicity itself—a true peasant meal.

evant word about its source or history and a useful "working ahead" paragraph that helps to give the cook her bearings.

As fine as all sections of *The Splendid Table* are, the chapter on pasta, called "Of Sacred Navels, Priest Stranglers, and the Paradise of the

pantry as the olive oil you added a decade ago.

"Like the landscape," muses John Dore Meis in his introduction to *A Taste of Tuscany*, "archetypal Italian cooking is Tuscan." In his book, Meis, an American expatriate who has lived in Italy for nearly twenty years, pays

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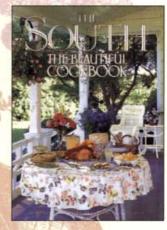
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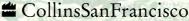


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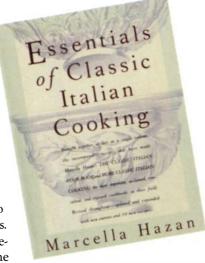
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#### Reviews

homage to that bit of earth, the food it produces, and the artisans and cooks who inhabit it. Reading this joyous book is very much like touring Tuscany with a knowledgeable guide who stuffs your pockets with authentic recipes for the best dishes you've eaten along the way.

The book is divided into chapters based on the seasons. All include essays on the specialties of that particular time of year and cover such topics as honey, truffles, chestnuts, pecorino cheese, prosciutto, wine vinegar, and panforte.

Our first trip is to an olive harvest and to the *frantoio* where the olives are crushed for their oil. Meis explains the process, then takes us to a local restaurant for the ritual of the *fettunta*, the eating of



An authoritative reference book for cooks in search of authentic Italian cuisine.

the oiled bread that celebrates the harvest.

With the exception of a salad made from edible weeds, Meis's recipes use ingredients that are now available to many Americans. The recipes represent favorites of Meis's, and each is a delight. Typical of the types of recipes contained in this small gem of a book is *Uova e Carne Secca del Pontormo*, a sort of scrambled-egg salad flavored with tangy greens and bacon, served warm for lunch or as a memorable first course. For those who can't imagine such a thing, there is a splendid, full-page color photograph, just one of many.

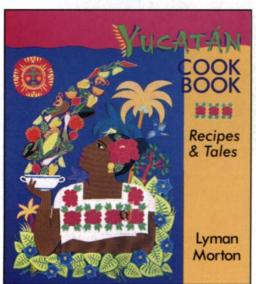
What Julia Child did for French cooking in America in the 1960s, Marcella Hazan did for Italian in the 1970s. Since the publication of her books, The Classic Italian Cookbook and More Classic Italian Cooking, she has become a favorite of American cooks whose repertoires are likely to contain many of Hazan's recipes.

In 1992, Hazan published a revised and combined edition of those two books, calling it *Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking.* In this combined edition, Hazan made improvements and adaptations of old favorites, removed the few recipes that no longer met her qualifications as "classic," and added new recipes as well.

What a recipe book this is—over 400 well-conceived recipes, all reflecting Hazan's understanding of the essential flavors of the ingredients. Many recipes are prefaced with historical notes, and include information on ingredients and instructions for working ahead. Essentials is well named.

Of special note is Hazan's section on pasta. The instructions here for making your own dough are clear, augmented by

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handsome, practical drawings. She even tells how to make your own rolling pin for pasta.

Originally published in 1954 and last revised in 1989, Italian Food, by Elizabeth David, was written at a time when most people in this country had only the vaguest notions (and prejudices) of what Italian cooking was all about. David, a literary and culinary scholar, spent a year in Italy researching the food and culinary customs of the country. The result was this marvelous cookbook that includes hundreds of succinct, informal recipes written in a relaxed vet literate style.

David is at once very English, as when she describes the preparation of snails ("The cloth must be changed...or it will be smelly and dirty beyond endurance") and a real Italophile, as in her appreciation for Sardinian kid cooked over a wood fire and then left to rest among aromatic myrtle leaves.



Succinct, informal recipes that reflect an intuitive understanding of Italian cooking.

The recipes here reflect David's intuitive understanding of Italy's cuisine. Her Salad of Raw Artichokes, for example, is at once obvious and unusual. Beans in the

Oven is simplicity itself—a true peasant meal. Her recipes for salt cod capture the soulful essence of the Mediterranean. And her respect for her reader as a cook is everywhere reflected in the many abbreviated recipes, such as lamb cutlets cooked with bay leaves, rosemary, garlic, pepper, white wine, and lemon, and served with dates stuffed with salted pistachios. Period.

Although the American edition of David's classic cookbook is out of print, you can find the British edition in used book shops, or you can order it from your book seller.

#### PUBLISHING INFORMATION

The Splendid Table, by Lynne Rossetto Kasper. Morrow, 1992. \$35, hardcover; 529 pp. ISBN 0-688-08963-1.

A Taste of Tuscany, by John Dore Meis. Abbeville Press, 1993. \$27.50, hardcover, 160 pp. ISBN 1-55859-466-3.

The Essentials of Italian Cooking, by Marcella Hazan. Alfred A. Knopf, 1992. \$30, hardcover. 688 pp. ISBN 0-394-58404-X. Italian Food, by Elizabeth David. Penguin, 1989. \$30, softcover. 376 pp. ISBN 0-14-046841-2.

Maggie Blyth Klein, a co-owner of Oliveto Restaurant in Oakland, California, is the author of The Feast of the Olive (Chronicle Books, 1994). ◆

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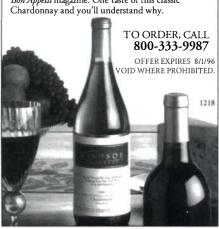
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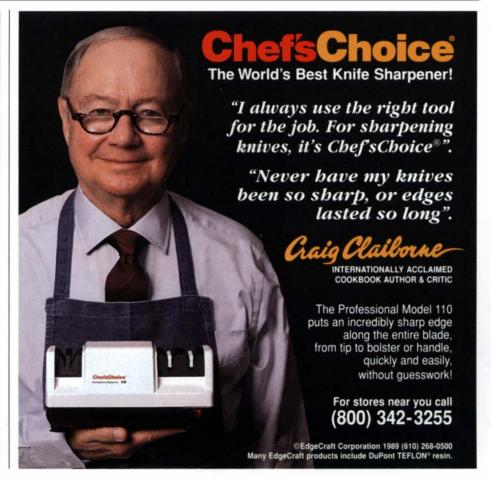
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The fresh leaf offers the most color, fragrance, and flavor. Like so many herbs,

tarragon is best fresh, since many of its more subtle flavors dissipate during the drying process. To judge the difference for yourself, make an omelet with commercially dried tarragon from the grocery

store and one with fresh tarragon. The fresh herb will give a brighter appearance, more aroma, and more complex and delicious flavors.

Tarragon belongs to the classic French blend called fines herbes, along with parsley, chervil, and chives. In France, the blend is always made from fresh herbs, never dried, and always added to a dish at the last moment so that the flavor and aroma remain in the dish and in the herbs, rather than in the air. This is a good practice whenever you use fresh herbs. You can find dried fines herbes blends in the supermarket, but again, I find the dried version a little too

Store carefully for better flavor. To keep tarragon for a day or two, roll it in damp paper towels, wrap it in plastic, and put it in the refrigerator. If you must keep it longer than that (and I don't recommend this: the longeryou keep it, the less flavor you'll get),

close to dried grass clippings.

stick the tarragon in water as you would a bunch of flowers and refrigerate it. No moisture should remain on the leaves, as this accelerates spoilage.

Go lightly with the knife, since tarragon's leaves are delicate and bruise easily. To properly chop them, pick the leaves off the stem, stack them, and give them just a few swipes of the knife.

#### FRESH TARRAGON CAN STAND BY ITSELF

I'm against pairing rules that stifle creativity, but as a general guideline, tarragon does not go well with other aggressive herbs, such as sage or rosemary: it's best alone or with more delicate herbal partners.

- ◆ Sprinkle tarragon leaves or tarragon vinegar on a first-course salad with orange slices—orange loves tarragon.
- ◆ Toss whole leaves into garden greens.
- ◆ Enliven a wild-mushroom sauté and nearly any potato dish with tarragon.
- ◆ Tarragon butter is a great mate for almost any white fish, as well as for chops and steaks.
- ◆ Lamb stew is delicious when spiked with tarragon.
- Fix iced tea with fresh tarragon, mint, and basil.
- ◆ I love tarragon in desserts. Try a tarragon-rhubarb or tarragon-orange sorbet.

Lynn Alley wrote Lost Arts (Ten Speed Press, 1995), a cook's guide to making fresh ingredients. She's at work on a Lost Arts herb manual.

BY LYNN ALLEY

aving grown up in meat-and-potatoes
America, I was impressed by tarragon's exotic flavor when I tasted Tarragon Chicken for the first time. Since then, I've savored it in a wide range of dishes, from stews to salads, and even in sorbets. Tarragon's anise overtones, full flavor, and peppery afterbite are much more familiar to me now, but the power of this delicate yet assertive herb strikes me anew every time I taste it.

#### THE BEST TARRAGON IS FRENCH AND FRESH

Two varieties of fresh tarragon are available—French and Russian—but only French is desirable. When you buy tarragon at the grocery store, you can assume you're getting French; Russian tarragon is relatively flavorless and therefore not cultivated commercially. If

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The best test is taste, and French tarragon's is distinct. A cool, aniselike flavor and a peppery afterbite will tell you it's the real thing.

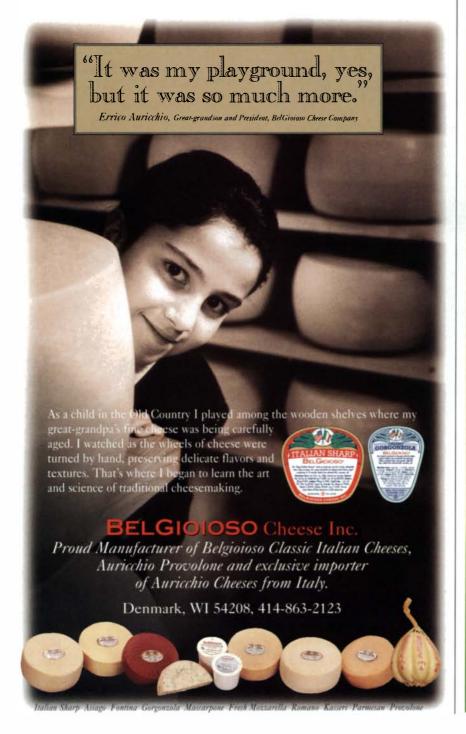
you're buying tarragon plants to grow in your garden, beware. At nurseries, Russian tarragon, with its larger, fleshier leaves, can be passed off (albeit unwittingly) as French. French tarragon produces no seeds; it must be grown from cuttings, and this takes time. Russian tarragon produces

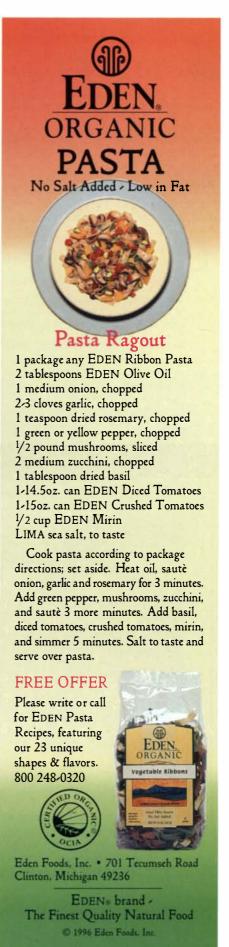
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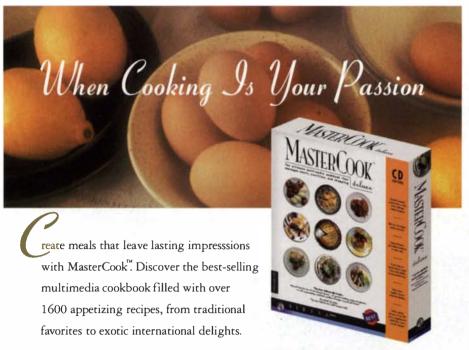
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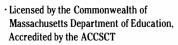
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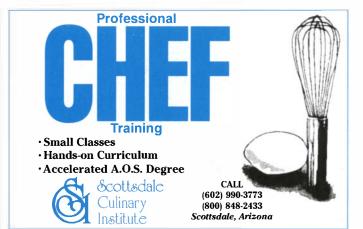
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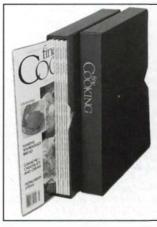


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Send event announcements to Calendar, *Fine Cooking*, PO Box 5506, Newtown, CT 06470-5506. Include dates, a complete address, and the phone number to call for more information. Listings are free, but restricted to events of direct interest to cooks. The deadline for entries in the October/November issue is July 1.

#### **ARKANSAS**

40th Annual Bradley County Pink Tomato Festival—June 13–15, Court Square, Warren. Call 501/226-5225.

#### **CALIFORNIA**

KQED International Beer and Food Festival—June 29, San Francisco Concourse, San Francisco. Call 415/553-2337.

9th Annual French Festival—July 13–14, Oak Park, Santa Barbara. A celebration of French cuisine and culture. Call 805/564-PARIS.

Sonoma's Salute to the Arts: An Indulgence in Fine Food, Fine Wine & Fine Art—July 20–21, Sonoma Plaza, Sonoma. Sample fine wines with cuisine fresh from Sonoma County's farms and sea, wander through fine art exhibits, enjoy open air performances, and meet local authors. Call 707/938-1133.

Small Brewers Festival of California—July 26–28, downtown Mountain View. Event featuring more than 40 microbrewers from California and more than 150 different beers. Call Pat Figueroa at 415/965-4783.

18th Annual Gilroy Garlic Festival—July 26--28, Christmas Hill Park, Gilroy. Call 408/842-1625.

Cuisines of California's Central Coast—July 30 through August 4, Santa Barbara. Seminar featuring the fresh produce, wines, and cooking of California's central coast. Sponsored by The Smithsonian Institution and The American Institute of Wine and Food. Call 202/357-4700.

#### **COLORADO**

14th Annual Food & Wine Magazine Classic at Aspen—June 14–16. Call 800/494-6396.

#### CONNECTICUT

The Heublein Grand Chefs Festival—May 29 through June 9, Greater Hartford area restaurants. Cookbook authors and celebrity chefs collaborate on a menu with Hartford area restaurants. Call 860/525-8200.

#### **FLORIDA**

The Palm Beach Food & Wine Festival '96—July 18–21, The Colony Hotel, Palm Beach. Featuring the cuisine of Chef Jean Louis Palladin, Chef Michel Richard, and Chef Francesco Ricci; a Grand Tasting of 300 different wines; ultrapremium cigars; fine ports and cognac; plus cooking demonstrations by top chefs. Call 800/604-CHEF (2433).

#### HAWAII

7th Annual Cuisines of the Sun—July 20–24, Mauna Lani Bay Hotel and Bungalows, Big Island. Celebrity chefs from around the country get together to prepare their award-winning cuisine with the theme "Made in the Americas: A North-South Salute to Summer." Call 800/367-2323.

#### **ILLINOIS**

Cuisine '96—June 7, Galleria Marchetti, Chicago. Sumptuous dinner prepared by several leading Chicago chefs, accompanied by a wine tasting and live jazz. Call 847/866-1344.

#### KANSAS

Beefiesta—July 26-27, Scott City. Celebration of the beef industry in Scott County. The event starts with a free beef barbecue on July 26 at the Scott County Fairgrounds and concludes with free beef tasting booths on July 27 at City Park. Call 3 16/872-3525.

#### LOUISIANA

5th Annual New Orleans Wine & Food Experience—July 25–28, The Fairmont Hotel, New Orleans. For information, call 504/529-WINE.



gust 1–4, Harbor Park, Rockland. Celebrate Maine's maritime heritage and its most famous catch. Events range from the coronation of the sea goddess to the lobster crate race, and thousands of pounds of fresh Maine lobster will be served. For a festival brochure and an area guide, call 800/LOB-CLAW.

#### **MARYLAND**

48th Annual Delmarva Chicken Festival—June 14–16, Wicomico Civic Center, Salisbury. Featuring the Delmarva chicken cooking contest, with 20 finalists competing for best chicken dish. Call 302/856-9037.

#### MASSACHUSETTS

Diner-Rama '96—June 21–24, Johnson & Wales Inn, Seekonk. A convention for diner enthusiasts hosted by The American Diner Museum. Two days of bus tours, viewing and eating in regional diners, lectures, slide shows and panel discussions on diner history and restoration, plus the sale of diner memorabilia. Includes a day of symposia on diner marketing and management. Call 401/461-7932.

#### **MICHIGAN**

National Asparagus Festival—June 7–9, downtown Shelby. Call Kathy Walicki or Joy Hamilton at 616/873-2129.

Culinary Classic—June 22, Oakland Community College, Orchard Ridge Campus, Farmington Hills. Food preparation and wine pairing seminars by nationally acclaimed chefs, grand tasting by 60 top area restaurants, plus a silent auction. Call 810/471-6340.

National Cherry Festival—July 6–13, Open Space, Traverse City. Call 616/ 947-4230; e-mail: NCF@traverse.com.

#### OREGON

10th Annual Oregon Brewers Festival—July 26–28, Waterfront Park, Portland. Beersamples from 60 microbreweries in the U.S. and Canada, plus exhibits of beer-making equipment and supplies. Call 503/778-5917.

#### **PENNSYLVANIA**

4th Pennsylvania Dutch Food Festival—June 20–22, Lancaster County. Sample traditional Pennsylvania Dutch foods madefrom recipes passed down from 17th and 18th century German, Amish, and Mennonite settlers. For a brochure, call 800/723-8824, ext. 2425.

#### **RHODE ISLAND**

15th Annual Schweppes Great Chowder Cook-Off—June 1, Newport Yachting Center, Newport. Over 25 restaurants compete for the title of Best Chowder in New England. Call Lynda Tobin at 401/846-1600, ext. 290.

Taste of Block Island Seafood Festival—June 22, Harbor Baptist Church, Block Island. Call 800/383-2474 or 401/466-2982.

#### TEXAS

American Culinary Federation National Convention—July 13–16, Marriott Rivercenter, San Antonio. Call 904/824-4468.

26th Annual Black-Eyed Pea Jamboree—July 20–21, Central Park, Athens. Black-eyed pea cooking contests for adults and children; pea eating, pea popping, and pea shelling contests; and more. Call 800/755-7878.

#### VIRGINIA

Virginia Wineries Festival—June 1–2, Great Meadow Field Events Center, The Plains. Call 800/277-CORK.

Pork, Peanut & Pine Festival—July 20–21, Chippokes State Park, Surry. A celebration of the three most important cash crops in the area, with many food booths featuring pork and peanuts. Call 804/294-3625.

#### WASHINGTON

Early Summer Harvest Marketplace & Dinner—June 8, Edmonds Community College, Edmonds. Educational event featuring the season's bounty. Meet area farmers and food suppliers during a "Marketplace" reception, followed by a four-course wine dinner prepared by Chef Walter Bronowitz and the students of the college's culinary program. Sponsored by the Pacific Northwest chapter of the American Institute of Wine and Food. Call Norma Rosenthal at 206/236-6108.



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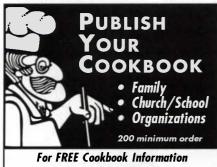




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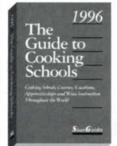
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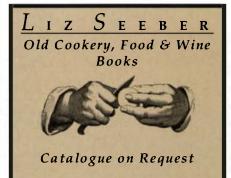
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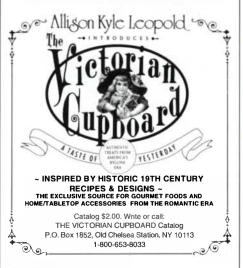
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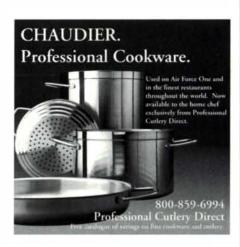
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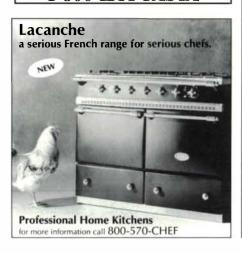
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Recipe (analysis per serving)		Calories		Protein	Carb			Fats (q)		Chal	Sodium	riba:	Notes
		total	fat	(q)	(g)	total	sat	mono	poly	Chol (mg)	(mg)	Fiber (g)	Notes
Turkish Bread & Olive Salad	34	210	57%	3	21	13	2	9	1	0	570	3	⅓ of recipe
Panzanella	35	290	61%	5	25	20	3	14	2	0	410	3	1/6 of recipe
Fattoush	35	150	58%	3	15	9	1	7	1	0	230	2	1/8 of recipe
Carolina Barbecue Sauce	39	10	0%	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	290	0	2 Tbs.
Carolina Barbecued Pork	40	420	54%	39	8	25	9	11	2	135	790	1	4 oz. pork
Roasted Corn	40	170	22%	5	34	4	0.5	2	1	0	290	4	
Overnight Coleslaw with Mustard Seed	40	120	64%	1	11	8	1	5	2	0	300	1	½ cup
Roasted New Potato Salad with Dijon	40	150	58%	2	15	10	1	6	3	20	150	1	½ cup
Cinnamon-Cornbread Cobbler	41	240	26%	4	44	7	4	2	1	35	180	4	
Mushrooms, Asparagus & Sunchokes	44	270	67%	5	22	20	2	8	9	0	280	4	
—variation with pasta & cream	45	580	46%	18	60	30	7	11	10	40	1080	6	w/o nut garnish
Green & Wax Beans with Brown Butter	45	140	70%	5	11	11	4	4	2	15	280	4	
Gingered Zucchini & Carrots	45	70	66%	1	6	5	1	3	2	0	15	2	
Spicy Pasta e Fagioli	48	550	30%	28	70	18	4	11	2	15	940	13	W/o cheese garnish
Tuscan White Bean Salad	49	370	36%	13	47	15	2	10	2	5	290	7	w/o tuna, olive oil
Bolognese Borlotti Beans	49	580	21%	32	83	14	3	7	2	80	1500	13	w/o cheese garnish
Halibut with Scallions & Sesame Oil	53	220	42%	25	2	10	2	4	4	45	220	1	
Steamed Grouper with Pesto	53	390	48%	46	5	21	4	12	4	80	510	1	
Steamed Salmon with Couscous	53	600	39%	40	52	26	4	16	5	65	950	7	
Steamed Clams with Garlic & Tomato	54	170	50%	8	6	10	6	3	1	40	130	1	
Grilled Pizza with Tomato-Balsamic Saud	ce 57	570	32%	22	76	20	4	12	2	35	1470	7	½ medium pizza
Nougat Glacé	60	340	59%	4	32	22	10	9	2	55	35	2	⅓₂ of recipe
Raspberry Coulis	60	10	0%	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1 Tbs.
Vegetable & Tomato Mousse Terrine	65	290	78%	3	16	25	9	13	2	40	550	5	
Passionfruit & Citrus Salad	72	190	4%	3	49	1	0	0.5	0.5	0	10	8	
Coconut Meringues	72	40	25%	1.	7	1	1	0	0	0	15	0	per piece
Passionfruit Sorbet	72	150	3%	1	38	0.5	0	0	0	0	10	4	
Passionfruit Pound Cake	73	330	42%	4	46	16	9	5	1	100	60	1	⅓₀ of recipe

The nutritional analyses have been calculated by a registered dietitian at The Food Consulting Company of San Diego, California. When a recipe gives a choice of ingredients, the first choice is the one used in

the calculations. Optional ingredients and those listed without a specific quantity are not included. When a range of ingredient amounts or servings is given, the smaller amount or portion is used.

don't eat much jam, and I'm not a big fan of raspberries. So why did I just make enough raspberry jam to feed several famished frugivores?

Because I have a raspberry patch. And every year, twice a year, the bushes grow heavy with fruit for a tantalizingly brief three weeks. If they bore fruit year-round in a constant, unhurried output, I probably never would have decided to buy those little quilted jars and get my canning pot down

it's over, it's over, and I can't have it back. Thank God they put movies on video.

The other day I was at it again, blithely determined to hoard—I was going to make jam. Our raspberry patch is large and unkempt, full of nettles and home to at least one wasp nest. And yet the picking was a joy: the plunk of the berry hitting the bottom of my plastic pint, and the thrill of lifting a branch that appeared to be

Fleeting pleasure depresses me; joy should be orderly and permanent. That's why I make raspberry jam.

from the top shelf of the pantry. I would never have felt the desperation that comes at the end of the harvest, the furious need to hang onto what is good but brief.

I've always been a hoarder. My bag of Peanut M&Ms always lasted longer than my sisters'; I would allow myself a few each day, or one every half hour, or one for every commercial break. I even hoarded while eating: I'd suck the shell off and then the chocolate and finally crunch the peanut. I loved to have some when they had none, of course, but there was something else fleeting pleasure depresses me; joy, I've decided, should be orderly and permanent. Seeing a terrific play can actually upset me, because when picked clean and finding ripe fruit waiting quietly on the underside. I emerged with a few bumps and scratches, but then I emerge with bumps and scratches when I go down the lane to get the mail.

I did succumb, however, to an acute case of berryberry. That's when a person (hoarders like myself are particularly susceptible) sees a beautiful, ripe berry just waiting to be plucked and absolutely, no kidding, has to pluck it. For me, as I chanted lovingly, "Come here, berryberry," it didn't matter that the berry in question was another three feet ahead of me through brush and bramble,

nor that it was leading me closer to the buzz of the wasps; I couldn't leave it alone. My hands shaking with greed, I frequently dropped the coveted fruit. O, the dark moments of the soul! I'm proud to say I did resist getting down on my knees and searching for the lost berry. Barely.

Anyway, I quickly amassed the required four pints, enjoying just the sight of my glass bowl heaped with red jewels. Mashed, they became five glorious cups. Whole raspberries have a matte exterior that gives a cool, appealing feel; mashed berries are absolutely voluptuous, strong smelling and wet, with a brilliant color.

Three rounds of jarsterilizing, jam-boiling, and water-bath canning, and I had done it. I had made jam. Twenty-four jars of red gold neatly lined up on my counter to cool. Twenty-four jars of cool red gold neatly stacked in my cabinet—next to six forgotten quarts of last summer's pickles. Maybe joy shouldn't be quite that permanent. Anyone for raspberry jam?

—Kate Cohen, Albany, New York ◆

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Baker Noel Comess insists that the dough rest for ten minutes after cutting. Otherwise, it can be "nervous" and hard to shape.



The dough for these rounded loaves, called boules, nestles upside down in linen-lined baskets (bannetons), which act as a form.

"A good handmade loaf of bread," says Noel Comess, "has a dark brown crust that's both crackling and chewy and a crumb that's creamy in color, moist, and open and irregular in structure."

Slashing the bread tops allows steam to escape so the crust will be crisp.



Loaves are removed from the oven with a tenfoot-long baker's peel and set on racks to cool.

# The art of handmade bread

Rare is the bakery that has hung onto tradition, but at Tom Cat Bakery in New York, the artisan's touch lives on. Loaves made of high-gluten flour milled to the bakery's own specifications are shaped by hand, lending appealing variations of taste and texture.

"Machines tend to homogenize bread dough," explains baker Noel Comess, who owns Tom Cat. "Hand work produces a dough that's more supple, looser—the way you are after a good massage."

